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ABSTRACT

This is a contrastive analysis of English and Modern Literary Arabic. Part one deals with phonology, including suprasegmentals and orthography. Part two deals with morphology, part three with sentence structure, part four with verb phrases, and part five with noun phrases. These sections emphasize structures that present problems to the Arabic-speaking student learning English. Part six is concerned with the meaning and usage of individual English words that are difficult for Arab students. A subject index and a word index conclude the volume. (AM)

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DEFENSE LANGUAGE INSTITUTE

A CONTRASTIVE STUDY OF ENGLISH AND ARABIC

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A CONTRASTIVE STUDY

OF

ENGLISH AND ARABIC

November 1974

DEFENSE LANGUAGE INSTITUTE

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PREFACE

The variety of Arabic described in this study is Modern Literary Arabic, also referred to as "Modern Standard Arabic" and "Contemporary Arabic". It is the language of publications in all the Arab states, as well as the oral language of formal occasions--radio and television, lectures and conferences, discussions on technical topics, etc. Literary Arabic is essentially the same throughout the Arab world, and exists alongside the various colloquial dialects, which do vary from country to country and even from village to village. The colloquial dialects are used to carry on the day-to-day activities of everyday life.

The literary language rather than a colloquial dialect has been chosen for this study because of the great universality of its applicability. The phonology morphology and syntax of Literary Arabic are more complex and more comprehensive than those of any of the dialects; thus, while the literary is not the first language of any Arab, its problems do represent those of all Arabic dialects. If any one dialect were to be chosen to represent all the rest, the range of problems presented would not be substantially different from those presented herein, whereas the particulars of the dialect would be so peculiar to that dialect as to limit the utility of this study to those familiar with that particular dialect. The literary is, in a very real sense, a composite of the features of all the dialects and represents a linguistic common ground for all Arabs. Finally, all formal education in the Arab world is in terms of Literary Arabic, and the educated Arab will tend to transfer into English the patterns of Literary Arabic rather than those of his particular colloquial dialect.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Part 1: Phonology
1.1 Intonation 1
1.2 Consonants and vowels 14
1.3 Consonant clusters 24
1.4 Handwriting 25

Part 2: Morphology
2.1.1 Parts of speech 29
2.1.2 Verbs 39
2.1.3 Particles 44

Part 3: Syntax: Sentence Structure
3.0 Introduction 46
3.1 English question types 57
3.2 Arabic question types 57
3.3 Yes-no questions 57
3.4 Negative questions 59
3.5 Tag questions 59
3.6 Aphorism 60
3.7 Be + predicate 60
3.8 Intransitive verbs 61
3.9 Two-word transitive verbs 61
3.10 Objects 61
3.11 Infinitive object complement 62
3.12 Infinitive as object 63
3.13 Gerundive objective complement 63
3.14 Nominalized verb complement 64
3.15 Nominal objective complement 64
3.16 Adjective infinitive complement 65
3.17 Linking verbs 65
3.18 Adjective complements 67
3.19 Adverbial complements 67
3.20 Complement of obligation 67
3.21 There + indefinite NP 68
3.22 It inversion 69
3.23 It statements 69
3.24 There inversion 70
3.25 Noun replacement 71
3.26 That + S as object 71
3.27 Wh-word + Sentence 71
3.28 Wh-word + infinitive as subject 72
3.29 Wh-word + infinitive as object 72
3.30 Infinitive as subject 73
3.31 Infinitive of purpose 74
3.32 Gerund nominal 74
3.33 Abstract nouns 75
3.34 Adjective + infinitive 75
3.35 Adjective + that 75
3.36 Adjective + gerundive 76
3.37 Adverbial clause 76
3.38 Connectives 76

Part 4: Syntax: Verb Phrase

4.0 Introduction 78
4.1 Agreement 79
4.2 Past tense forms 80
4.3 Arabic verb inflection 80
4.4 Third person singular inflection 81
4.5 Interrogative 81
4.6 Positive and negative 81
4.7 Negative particle not 82
4.8 Negative with modals 83
4.9 Subjunctive 83
4.10 Common tense 84
4.11 Arabic common tense 84
4.12 Past tense as completion 86
4.13 Past habitual 86
4.14 English preterit forms 87
4.15 Modal auxiliaries 87
4.16 Arabic problems with modals 88
4.17 Use of to with modals 88
4.18 Modals with two meanings 89
4.19 Hypothetical situations 91
4.20 English past time 92
4.21 Would 92
4.22 Wish 92
4.23 Past modals 93
4.24 If and would clauses 94
4.25 English progressive 94
4.26 Modal progressive 95
4.27 Present perfect progressive 95
4.28 Past perfect progressive 95
4.29 Non-perfect and perfect 96
4.30 Present perfect constructions 98
4.31 Verbs which cannot be progressive 99
4.32 Passive 99
4.33 Indirect objects and passives 100
4.34 Adverbs 100
4.35 Other adverbial expressions 101
4.36 Ordering of adverbs 101
4.37 Adverbs of frequency 102
4.38 Preverbs 103
4.39 Comparing adverbs 103
4.40 Comparing adjectives 104
4.41 Adverbials of degree 105
4.42 Adverbs of location 105
4.43 Derived verb forms 105
4.44 Two-word verbs 106
4.45 Particles 109
4.46 Manner adverbs 109
4.47 Infinitives as complements 110

Part 5: Syntax: Noun Phrase
5.0 Introduction 111
5.1 Number classes of nouns 113
5.2 Compound nouns 115
5.3 Adjectives as noun phrase 116
5.4 Derivation 116
5.5 The -ate suffix 117
5.6 Variations in derivations 117
5.7 Feminine morphemes 118
5.8 Nouns derived from verbs 118
5.9 Diminutives 118
5.10 Possessive forms 119
5.11 Determiners 119

Part 6: Vocabulary 143

Subject Index 174

Word Index 182

A Contrastive Study of English and Arabic

Part One

The Phonology of English and Arabic

1.1.1. Intonation

The prosodic features of language (intonation, stress, and rhythm) are not as well understood as the segmental phonemes. Less detailed attention is usually given them in language teaching than to the other areas of syntax and phonology. This is unfortunate, since it is the imperfect mastery of these features that gives rise to foreign accent and to misunderstanding of a speaker's intent.

Tone refers to the rising and falling of voice pitch in conversation.

Stress refers to the relative prominence that is given to particular words in phrases and to particular syllables in words.

Rhythm is the more or less regular recurrence of stressed syllables in speech.

These features are dependent on each other only to the extent that none of them occurs without the other two. They constitute a set of vocal features which every language draws upon to perform different functions. For example, in a tone language such as Chinese, rising or falling voice pitch (tone) may be used to distinguish meanings between words. This is not the case in English, however, where stress sometimes performs this function.

noun : dígest - digést : verb

In Arabic, none of the prosodic features performs the function of distinguishing between parts of speech.

1.1.2. An utterance may be said with a variety of different, though related, meanings. For example, by shifting the location of contrastive tone and stress:

Numbers refer to the relative frequency of the vibration of vocal bands.	high 3. mid 2. low 1.	We went home.	(emphasizing where we went)
	high 3. mid 2. low 1.	We went home.	(emphasizing who went)

1.1.3. Tone refers to the rising and falling patterns of voice pitch in conversation. In English, voice pitch is contrastive, inasmuch as there are times when it alone distinguishes meaning. However, it is contrastive only at the utterance level, but not at the word level, as it is in a tone language:

3.
2. Yes. (answer, with falling intonation)
1.

3.
2. Yes? (question-response, with rising intonation)
1.

3.
2. You're going home. (statement, with falling pitch)
1.

3.
2. You're going home? (question, with rising pitch)
1.

1.1.4. The unit in an English utterance which carries a contrastive pitch pattern is called a tone group. It consists of a single information-bearing unit:

Yes?

In Paris.

Mary met John in Paris.

1.1.5. An utterance may contain more than one tone group:

Steve wants a horse, but he can't have one.

I'll go later when it's convenient.

Mary met John, in Paris!

The last example contains two tone groups because the speaker is focusing on two information units: Mary met John (not someone else) in Paris (not somewhere else).

1.1.6. The location at which contrastive tone is found is called the tonic. This location may vary from sentence to sentence, depending on what information the speaker wishes to emphasize. Tones occurring elsewhere than on the tonic syllable are not contrastive:

1. Mary met John in Paris. (Not Rome.)

2. Mary met John in Paris. (She met John, not George.)

3. Mary met John in Paris. (Mary met him, not Elizabeth.)

If the tonic is not being used to express special emphasis, as it is in examples 2 and 3 above, it normally occurs toward the end of the utterance, on the last content word but not on pronouns.

1.1.7. English uses three kinds of contrastive tone:

rising: Yes?

falling: Yes.

sustained: Well...

1.1.8. Falling tone occurs at the end of a statement, on the last content word. It indicates that the utterance is finished:

Mary met John in Paris.

It often happens that the voice rises in pitch just before the falling tone on the tonic syllable. This is not contrastive; it is merely a transition to the tonic falling tone.

When falling tone occurs with stress anywhere else in the sentence, it indicates contrastive emphasis:

Mary met John in Paris.

Mary met John in Paris.

1.1.9. When rising tone occurs finally, it signals a question or incredulity or emotion:

Are you going?

You were there?

When it occurs elsewhere in the sentence, it indicates incredulity or emotion too:

Mary met John in Paris?

Syllables occurring after the tonic may remain at high pitch. This is not contrastive.

1.1.10. Sustained tone occurs in clause-final position and in series. It is manifested as a fading tone, either level or slightly rising. It indicates that something is to follow.

Sustained tone connects the parts of discourse. It binds together subordinate and compound clauses:

Mary met John in Paris (→) and they went to the opera.

Steve wants a horse (→), but he can't have one now.

Sustained tone occurs in interrupted discourse. It indicates that the speaker is leaving his utterance unfinished:

Well (→), if you say so...

(→)
We'd like to stay, but...

Sustained tone occurs in direct address:

(→)
Sam, I'd like you to meet Judy.

1.1.11. A primary stress occurs with the tonic syllable:

She brought a new dréss.

Steve wants a hórse.

We ate at twó.

Mary met Jóhn in Paris.

1.1.12. Tones which occur other than at the tonic are not contrastive. They may be neutral in pitch, high, or low, and are extremely difficult to analyze, because they are not contrastive. English speakers do not listen for them.

1.1.13. The tone group is divided into one or more feet. A foot contains a strongly stressed initial syllable, and any weakly stressed syllables which may occur before the next strongly syllable. We use single accent marks to mark foot divisions. The sentence:

Gértrude met Rúdolph in Bángkok.

consists of one tone group containing three feet, the tonic syllable showing falling tone. The sentence:

Yes?

consists of one tone group containing one foot, which in turn consists of only one syllable. The tonic shows rising tone. The sentence:

All little gírls are gód.

consists of one tone group containing three feet, with falling tone on the tonic syllable.

1.1.14. Within the same tone group, each foot tends to have approximately the same time duration. This means that the major stresses occur at approximately the same time intervals. This is the famous English "stressed-time" rhythm. These foot durations are only approximately equal, and their length (or tempo) may change from one tone group to another.

It usually happens that an utterance consists of feet which contain unequal numbers of syllables. In order to keep the tempo regular, the speaker compensates for this in two ways:

1) By pronouncing syllables more slowly when there are fewer of them per foot.

2) By pronouncing them faster and sometimes phonetically reducing them when there are more of them per foot. Similar phonemes get squeezed together in a process called assimilation. Compare:

All little girls are good.

and All of those little girls are good.

Here we see that the final syllable good is pronounced more slowly than individual syllables in the preceding foot, and that good is of about the same length as each of the preceding feet.

1.1.15 When assimilation and reduction occur, such pronunciations as these occur:

What kind do you want? : /hwa káin dʒu wánt/?
Did you eat yet? : /dʒítʃét/?

1.1.16. If English were actually pronounced such that each initial foot syllable were strongly stressed, the language would have a sing-song sound to it, of the sort particularly noticeable in bad poetry. We avoid this by means of a device called isochronism. Isochronism is the term for the fact that feet can be squeezed together in such a way that syllables are pronounced faster, and feet are reduced. For example, pronounce:

The hórse trotted into the bárn.
Thát rubber baby buggy bumper's expénsive.
It's almost exáctly thirty-seven and a half míles.

1.1.17. Rest may occur at any point in a foot, including the initial position. Here it is manifested as a mere silence which takes up time which would otherwise be taken by a stressed syllable. Compare, for instance, the following utterances:

This is my teacher, ˽ Mr. Browning. (Rest is indicated by the caret.)

Here, the utterance consists of two tone groups, and Mr. Browning is in direct address, that is, Mr. Browning is being introduced to my teacher.

This is my teacher, Mr. Browning.

Here the utterance consists of one tone group. Mr. Browning is given as supplementary information. That is, Mr. Browning is the name of my teacher.

The first foot of the second tone group in the first example has no initial stressed syllable. Instead, there is a pause, or rest, which we indicate with /˽/. The rest here, plus the word mister, roughly make up the total time duration of this foot, so that it is about equal in time duration to that of the following foot.

It is not uncommon for tone groups to start with an unstressed syllable. In all such cases we postulate the occurrence of rest in the first part of the foot:

. He can't speak German.

. But I thought he was German!

1.1.18. In abstract and general terms, Arabic prosodic features can be described much the same way as English. However, in particular details, there are enough major differences so that an Arabic speaker has a fair amount of difficulty in mastering English prosodic patterns.

1.1.19. As in English, Arabic sentence stress normally coincides with the tonic, which is usually located at the end of an utterance, but which is moveable in situations of special emphasis.

1.1.20. Arabic, like English, is stress-timed. That is, the time lapses between stresses are approximately equal. However, in Arabic almost every word has a primary or secondary stress. Many single Arabic words, which consist of a stem plus one or more bound morphemes, are the translation equivalents of English phrases, which have strongly stressed "content" words and weakly stressed "structure" words:

What's his bróther's name? (not his sister's)

Note the one primary stress on bróther.

Arabic:	másmu	ʔaxíih
English gloss:	what name	his brother

Note the two primary stresses. Whereas in English there is one strongly stressed syllable per phrase, Arabic has one rhythmic stress per word. Other less-stressed syllables in a word are quickly passed over, as are weakly stressed syllables in English.

1.1.21. Arabic intonation also uses rising and falling pitch patterns. However, pitch in Arabic does not fall as low as in English. This, and the fact that comparable pitch patterns serve different functions in the two languages, constitutes a major problem for the Arabic student learning English.

1.1.22. When the voice changes pitch levels in English, the change may spread either over a single vowel or over a sequence of vowels. The time length of the change depends on the number of vowels. In Arabic, a change may occur on only one vowel at a time, with abrupt change from one to the next.

1.1.23 Word stress in Arabic operates on entirely different principles than in English. Placement of word stress in Arabic is determined by the structure of the word, that is, by its

arrangement in terms of consonants and vowels:

1) The last syllable of a word is never stressed.

2) If the next to last syllable is "heavy", that is, if it contains either a long vowel or a short vowel plus two consonants, then that syllable is stressed.

3) If the penultimate syllable is not heavy, stress then falls on the third to last syllable.

4) Any suffixes added may change the structure of the word. When this occurs, stress is then moved to meet the above conditions.

1.1.24. Word stress in English does not follow such simple rules, and it is much less well-understood than in Arabic. In part, this is because stress is bound up with the derivational history of words from their original Latin, Germanic, and other roots. Some general rules can be given, but individual cases require lengthy explanation.

1.1.25. Arabic speakers tend to substitute primary or secondary stress for weak stress when speaking English:

Máy I háve ànóthèr cúp òf téa, pléase?

Explanation: In both languages, the word(s) on which sentence stress falls becomes the most prominent part in the sentence, and other stresses, except the primary, are reduced to secondary and sometimes weak stress, but Arabic words keep the citation form of stress or are reduced only to secondary stress. The tonic is usually pronounced in Arabic with a kind of super-primary stress (extra loud).

1.1.26. Arabic speakers tend to pronounce English monosyllabic words such as am, is, are, for loudly with primary stress when used in conversational speech.

Monosyllabic words in both languages receive primary stress (citation stress) when pronounced in isolation. However, stress distribution patterns within longer utterances differ in each language. In English conversation, such words receive weak stress, along with reduction of some phonemes. For example, He is becomes He's. Since Arabic does not follow the same pattern of distribution, the speaker produces He is with citation stress.

1.1.27. Arabic speakers have difficulty placing stress in English words, especially in words of four or more syllables.

Stress in Arabic must fall within the last three syllables of a word. Exact placement is determined by the position of long units in the word (see 1.1.23). Using Arabic stress rules, the speaker produces such sounds as:

ròommáte	- stressing the final long vowel
comfórtable	- stressing the vowel followed by 2 consonants
yèsterdáy	- stressing the final long vowel
éleven	- stressing the third to last syllable, since neither a long vowel nor a vowel plus two consonants sequence occurs

1.1.28. Arabic speakers shorten English syllables receiving primary stress and lengthen syllables receiving weak stress.

Stressed syllables in English are pronounced longer than unstressed syllables. Arabic speakers, in shifting primary stress, shift length concurrently:

ròommáte - room is shortened; mate is lengthened

1.1. 29. Greetings

English: Good morning. Arabic: Good morning.

English and Arabic use the same intonation contours for this phrase. However, since Arabic pitch does not fall as low as English, Arabs tend to sound somewhat curt to native English speakers.

1.1.30. English: First speaker: How are you?

Response: How are you?

In English, the first speaker raises pitch on the second word, are, while his responder, replying in a friendly manner, raises pitch on the final word, you.

Arabic: First speaker: How are you?

Response: How are you?

In this example, the Arabic pattern requires a high pitch on the first word, which is transferred into English. In the response, the Arabic pattern requires the addition of a pronoun, rather than a change in pitch. Hence, the Arabic speaker can't handle the intonation pattern at all.

1.1.31. The tone group in English often is co-extensive with the entire utterance. Thus:

How are you today?

has one primary stress on you, the other lesser stresses falling into place, and it has one tonic syllable--that of the word you. So, the voice goes like this in Arabic:

Hów áre yóu todáy?

1.1.32. Matter-of-fact statements:

Both languages use a final falling intonation in matter-of-fact statements. However, Arabic pitch does not fall as far as English, giving the impression, when transferred to English, that the speaker is not yet finished talking. For example, an Arabic speaker might say:

. I don't wánt you to bríng it in the mórning.

This leaves the impression that he is immediately going to say when he wants it to be brought. His final intonation sounds like English sustained intonation.

1.1.33. In contrastive situations in English, with attention centered on verbs and numerals, the center of the pattern falls on the auxiliary verb:

But, I had lived in Chicago before I went to New York.

And on the second digit of the numeral:

I said twenty-eight, not twenty-nine.

The auxiliary construction does not exist in Arabic, so the speaker focuses on the main verb:

But I had lived in Chicago before I went to New York.

The first digit of the numeral is emphasized in Arabic. Thus:

I said twenty-eight, not twenty-nine.

1.1.34. The use of the verb to be in English is different from its use in Arabic, especially in its present tense form. A contrastive situation, which, in English puts emphasis on the verb:

English is a difficult language.

is indicated in Arabic by the addition of an emphatic word or particle. The Arabic speaker neither notices nor reproduces the pitch emphasis in English, especially since he tends to emphasize each word anyway.

1.1.35. Tone in questions: Wh- questions

English uses falling tone at the end of a question which requests information. The center of the sentence contour in English is moveable, depending on the focus of attention.

Arabic also uses falling tone, which, however, does not fall as far as in English. The intonation is centered on the interrogative word, so that the Arabic speaker, when speaking English, raises pitch on the interrogative word no matter where the intonation center is focused. For example, an Arabic speaker says:

Where are you going?

Compare the usual English:

Where are you going?

1.1.36. Lack of stress on pronouns

In contrastive situations involving pronouns, English puts added stress on the pronoun to be emphasized. When a pronoun is to be emphasized, Arabic adds another pronoun, without stress, to achieve the same effect as does stressing a pronoun in English. Hence, Arabic speakers speaking English pronounce the sentence with no focus to indicate contrast.

The Arabic verb includes within it reference to the subject of the verb. It has a suffix that means pronoun subject. This is similar to Latin amo, meaning I love. Compare:

katabnā, ...we wrote. and katabat, ...she wrote.

To emphasize the subject, an independent subject pronoun is supplied without stress:

katabnā naḥn, ...we wrote. katabat hiya, ...she wrote.

Independent pronouns may also be added after a pronoun suffix for emphasis:

kitābī, ...my book kitābī ʔanā, ...my book

English does not stress sentence-final pronouns,

I gáve it to him.

Arabic stresses all words, including sentence-final pronouns:

I gáve it to hím.

thus producing contrast where it is not intended.

1.1.37. Yes-no questions

The standard contour for yes-no questions in English is a fall in pitch at the end of the question. Arabic uses a pitch rise in that position, similar to the polite incredulous English question, which Arabic speakers then transfer into English:

Is he the new quartermaster? becomes

Is he the new quartermaster?

to which one is tempted to respond: "Yes." Or furthermore:

Do you want tea or coffee? (one or the other) becomes

Do you want tea or coffee? (causing one to want to answer "yes")

1.1.38. In English, amazement can be expressed by a question using a contour which emphasizes key words. Arabic uses a level contour for this purpose, which, when transferred to English, makes a speaker sound a little angry when he does not mean to be:

Do you really like to eat Arab food?

instead of the more normal (in English):

Do you really like to eat Arab food?

1.1.39. Echo Questions

Whereas English uses a high rising contour at the end of an echo question, Arabic uses a falling one, which Arabic speakers transfer to English:

English: What did you say his brother's name is?

Arabic: What did you say his brother's name is?

1.1.40. Requests and Commands

Normally, both languages use falling final contours:

Wait a minute.

Here, as elsewhere, Arabic intonation does not fall as far as English. The Arabic speaker tends to say:

Wait a minute.

For contrastive requests, English uses a rising final contour:

May I have another cup of tea, please?

Here, Arabic speakers are likely to substitute the falling contour which Arabic uses in such situations.

May I have another cup of tea, please?

1.1.41. Exclamatory sentences

Exclamations are generally indicated by rising contours in both languages, but Arabic contours are typically of a higher pitch than those in English. In substituting these contours, Arabic speakers seem to express stronger emotional feelings than do their English counterparts.

English: What? becomes What?

1.1.42. Attached questions

English uses falling intonation when expecting confirmation:

English: He likes milk, doesn't he?

Arabic: He likes milk, doesn't he?

and rising intonation when asking for information:

English: He likes milk, doesn't he?

Arabic: He likes milk, doesn't he?

Arabic uses a rise in both cases, slightly higher in the latter.

1.2. English and Arabic Segmental Sounds: Consonants and Vowels

Chart I

English Consonants								
		BOTH LIPS (bilabial)	LOWER LIP AND UPPER TEETH (labiodental)	TIP OF TONGUE AND TEETH (interdental)	TIP OF TONGUE AND TOOTH RIDGE (apicoalveolar)	FRONT PART OF TONGUE AND HARD PALATE (laminopalatal)	BACK OF TONGUE AND SOFT PALATE (dorsovelar)	THROAT (glottal)
stops	voiceless	(p)			t		k	
	voiced	b			d		(g)*	
affricates	voiceless					(tʃ)		
	voiced					(dʒ)*		
fricatives	voiceless		f	θ	s	ʃ		h
	voiced		(v)	ð	z	(ʒ)*		
nasals		m			n		(ŋ)	
laterals					l			
semivowels		w			r	y		

Sounds enclosed by circles are not phonemic in Arabic.

*Arabs from different parts of the Arab world will use only one of these three -- /dʒ/, /ʒ/ or /g/ -- and will lack the other two. For example, Saudis and Iraqis will say /dʒ/ and Levantines and most North Africans will say /ʒ/ while Cairenes will say /g/.

Chart II

The Consonant Phonemes of Arabic

		BOTH LIPS	LOWER LIP & UPPER TEETH	TIP OF TONGUE & TEETH	EMPHATIC VELARIZED	TIP OF TONGUE & TOOTH RIDGE	EMPHATIC VELARIZED	FRONT OF TONGUE & HARD PALATE	BACK OF TONGUE & SOFT PALATE	BACK OF TONGUE & UVULA	THROAT	GLOTTIS
stops	vl					t	(ṭ)		k	(q)		(ʔ)
	vd	b				d	(ḍ)		g*			
affricates	vl											
	vd							dʒ*				
fricatives	vl		f	θ°		s	(ṣ)	ʃ		(x)	(ḥ)	h
	vd			ð°	(ð̣)°	z		ʒ*		(ɣ)	(ʕ)	
trills, flap						r#						
nasals		m				n						
laterals						l	(ɫ)					
semivowels		w						y				

Sounds in circles are not phonemic in English. Subscript dot indicates velarization (pharyngealization).

*Arabs from different regions will use one of these three sounds, /dʒ/ʒ/g/, and will lack the other two.

°In some dialects /θ/ is replaced by /s/, /ð/ by /z/, and /ð̣/ by velarized /ẓ/ which occurs only as a substitute for /ð̣/.

#English and Arabic r's are phonemically (structurally, functionally) interchangeable, but not phonetically: /r/ is a flap, while /rr/ is a trill.

Note: The ideal pronunciation of literary Arabic that all Arabs aim at includes:

/dʒ/ rather than /ʒ/ or /g/ /θ/ rather than /s/
/ð/ rather than /z/ /ð̣/ rather than /z/

For those who have the first of these pairs of sounds in their own dialect, English is no problem. However, those who have the second sounds in their dialects tend to substitute these sounds instead. Thus, a Cairene will tend to say g-s-z-ẓ; a Druse, ʒ-θ-ð-ð̣; a Baghdadi, dʒ-θ-ð-ð̣, etc.

1.2.1. Bilabial stops: /p/ and /b/

a. /p/ and /b/ do not constitute separate phonemes in Arabic. The voiceless stop [p] occurs only as an allophonic variant of the voiced /b/. The problem, then, for Arabic speakers learning English, is in learning to distinguish /p/ and /b/ as separate phonemes, and in learning proper pronunciation of /p/.

b. In releasing both sounds, in both initial and final positions, the Arab often muffles the distinction between them. Thus /pen/ and /brg/ appear to have the same initial articulation and an English listener has difficulty determining whether /p/ or /b/ is being used. Arabic word-final stops are fully released:

cat in English is [kætʰ] or [kæt̚], but Arabic is always [kæt].

c. Arabs who learn to make /p/ and /b/ distinct often hyperform /p/, so that it is aspirated where it shouldn't be:

topmost	*[tapʰmost]
clasps	*[klæspʰs]
tap with	*[tæpʰwɪθ]

d. The semivowels /l/, /r/, /w/, and /y/ should be slightly devoiced after /p/. The Arab does not devoice these phonemes in this position:

pray	*[bre]
pure	*[byur]

An epenthetic vowel may be inserted between /p/ and /l/:

play	*[prleɪ]

e. /p/ and /b/ should not be exploded before /t/ and /d/. The Arab has some difficulty with this:

apt	*[æpʰt]
rubbed	*[rəbʰd] or *[rəbɪd]

f. Before /θ/ and /ð/, the plosion of /p/ should be absorbed by the fricative: depth. Arabic difficulties here depend on the dialect, and on the native speaker's familiarity with Classical Arabic, which has the phonemes /θ/ and /ð/. The Arabic speaker will produce a strongly released /p/ in these positions.

depth	*[dɛpʰθ] or *[dɛpʰəs]

1.2.2. Alveolar stops: /t/ and /d/

a. Arabic /t/ and /d/ are dental stops, produced by closure of the air passage by the tongue at the teeth. But English /t/ and /d/ are alveolar. Learning to produce the English alve-

olar versions is a relatively simple matter, once the articulatory differences are explained.

b. In places where English /t/ is strongly aspirated:

initially:	tool	[tʰul]
before stressed syllable:	attempt	[ətʰɛmpt]

Arabic speakers can produce a satisfactory /t/ fairly easily. But where English /t/ can be weakly aspirated:

finally:	pit	[pIt]
before unstressed syllable:	writer	[raɪtəɹ]

and where both /t/ and /d/ can be unreleased:

finally: bad [bæd̚] etc. pit [pʰIt̚]

the Arabic speaker has a more difficult time mastering proper articulation. Arabic /t/ and /d/ are strongly released in these positions; the carry-over from Arabic habits sounds rather emphatic to English speakers.

c. Both /t/ and /d/ resemble a flap [ɾ] intervocalically. The Arabic speaker will carefully pronounce /t/ or /d/ clearly in these positions.

ladder	*[lædəɹ]	(citation form)
letter	*[lɛtʰəɹ]	(citation form)

d. English /d/ is dental preceding /θ/: width. The Arabic speaker who is familiar with the /θ/ of Classical Arabic has no problem here.

e. A voiced /t/ occurs in English:

1) Intervocalically:	butter	[bʌt̬əɹ]
2) Preceding syllabic /l/:	subtle	[sʌt̬l̩]
3) Between /l/ and unstressed vowel:	malted	[mɔɫt̬Id]
4) Between /n/ and unstressed vowel:	twenty	[twɛnt̬I]
5) Between unstressed vowels:	at another	[æt̬ənʌðəɹ]

In these positions an Arabic speaker will tend to use a strongly articulated voiceless [t], which makes him sound like a foreigner.

f. There is no plosion [ʰ] when /t/ occurs before stops:

at camp	[ætkʰæmp]
light bomb	[laɪtbɑm]

The Arab is likely to pronounce these:

at camp *[æthkhæmph]
light bomb *[laɪthbɑm]

g. The release of /t/ and /d/ is absorbed by a following fricative:

hits [hIts]
bids [bIdz]

The Arabic speaker can handle this with relative ease, although [hIt͡s] and [bIdəz] will be heard occasionally.

1.2.3. Velar stops: /k/ and /g/

a. English /g/ will be no problem to Egyptians from Cairo or Alexandria, to Muslim Iraqis, or to Bedouin Arabs, all of whom have /g/ in their dialects. Other Arabs have instead of /g/ either /d͡ʒ/ or /ʒ/, and will find /k/ - /g/ a problem.

b. The aspiration rules for /k/ and /g/ are the same as those for other English stops.

c. The plosion of both phonemes in English is absorbed by a following stop or fricative; but Arabs may insert an extra vowel.

act *[ækət] begged *[bɛgəd]
racks *[rækəs] dogs *[dɔgəz]

1.2.4. The Glottal stop: [ʔ]

It is difficult for an Arabic speaker not to pronounce [ʔ] before every word-initial vowel:

Write ʔit ʔas ʔit ʔis ʔon the paper.

He must learn to talk in terms of phrases rather than words. The glottal stop occurs in English, but it does not have phonemic status. It occurs:

between vowels: India office [IndIəʔɔfəs]
before vowels, phrase initially: I did [ʔɑɪdId]

The glottal stop has phonemic status in Arabic. The problem for Arabic speakers is in learning to think of it and use it as a non-distinctive sound.

1.2.5. Fricatives:

/f/ - /v/ /s/ - /z/
/θ/ - /ð/ /ʃ/ - /ʒ/

a. /v/ does not exist in Arabic. The Arabic speaker will at first have some difficulty hearing and producing /v/ as a

separate phoneme from /f/:

feel, veal } *[fil] feel *[vil] (hyperform)

b. /θ/ and /ð/ exist in Colloquial Arabic, but only in certain dialects. They do, however, occur in Classical Arabic. Persons familiar with Classical Arabic may have relatively little difficulty with these sounds. Those not familiar with Classical Arabic are likely to substitute /z/ for /ð/ and /s/ for /θ/:

brother *[brʌzəɹ]
author *[ʔosəɹ]

c. /s/ and /z/ have dental articulation in Arabic. A minor problem is learning English alveolar articulation of /s/ and /z/.

d. /ʃ/ is phonemic in Arabic, and compares with English /ʃ/.

e. /ʒ/ does have phonemic status in certain Arab regions. See /dʒ/, 1.2.6.

1.2.6. Affricates: /tʃ/ and /dʒ/

Whether an Arabic speaker has difficulty with these sounds depends on his dialect. The phoneme /dʒ/, which is standard in Modern Literary Arabic, may be replaced by:

/g/ in Cairo and Alexandria
/ʒ/ in Damascus, Jerusalem, Beirut and North Africa.

So, speakers from these cities may substitute /g/ or /ʒ/ for English /dʒ/ because of the habits in their dialects. The phoneme /q/, the uvular voiceless stop, is separate from /k/ in all dialects of Arabic. But Iraqi and Bedouin Arabs (including Saudi) will tend to confuse /g/, the voiced velar stop, which they normally substitute for Modern Literary Arabic /q/, with /dʒ/ and /ʒ/.

1.2.7. The voiceless /h/ with cavity friction:

a. occurs only initially: horse
and medially: behind.

/h/ is more restricted in English than in Arabic. For instance, /h/ can't occur following a vowel in English in the same syllable but it can occur in all positions in Arabic. Consequently, it causes relatively little difficulty for Arabic speakers.

b. Arabic speakers do have some difficulty with /hw/:

where *[wɛr]
which *[wɪtʃ]

substituting /w/ for /hw/ in all cases. However, this is also common among English speakers.

1.2.8. Nasals: /m/ /n/ /ŋ/

a. In both languages /m/ is bilabial except before /f/ (comfort), where it is labiodental. It causes no articulatory problems for Arabs.

b. /n/ in English is alveolar, except before /θ/, where it is dental. In Arabic, /n/ has dental articulation, except when followed by a consonant which is not dental. In this case, it varies in point of articulation:

/nt/ bint (girl) [bInt̪] (dental articulation)

c. The velar nasal /ŋ/ has phonemic status in English. It occurs medially:

singer

and finally:

long.

/ŋ/ occurs in Arabic only as a variant of /n/, when /n/ is followed by a velar consonant (as in the English finger). Hence, an Arabic speaker has much difficulty forming /ŋ/ without a following velar stop:

singer *[sIŋgɚ]
ringing *[rIŋgIŋg]

An Arabic speaker will carefully pronounce the /g/ incorrectly in both of the above words. His difficulties are compounded by the fact that the velar stop is spelled in all words where /ŋ/ occurs, whether it is pronounced or not, and since Arabic is pronounced much the way it is spelled, he carries his habits of spelling-pronunciation over into English.

d. The nasals /m/ and /n/ can function as vowels in English. In this case, they are called syllabic consonants:

button [bətn̩]
glisten [glIsn̩]
hidden [hIdn̩]
schism [sIzm̩]
chasm [kæzm̩]

This causes two problems for the Arabic speaker: 1) when the word is spelled with a final -en or -em, he will give the vowel its full value:

bitten *[bIthɛn]
glisten *[gəlIs(t)ɛn]

2) When the word is spelled with a final consonant plus nasal letter, the Arabic speaker considers the nasal to be part of the preceding syllable and does not give it its full syllabic value:

rhythm *[rIðm] instead of [rIðm]
schism *[sIzm] instead of [sIzm]

1.2.9. /w/

Arabic /w/ is satisfactory in English in prevocalic positions. For problems in preconsonantal or final positions, see Diphthongs, Section 1.2.15.

1.2.10. /r/ in English is a retroflexed vowel. In Arabic it is a flap or trill of the tongue-tip: [ɾ] or [ř]. The Arabic speaker has difficulty learning to produce the English sound, and often, at first, substitutes the Arabic flap.

rat *[ɾæth]
car *[khɑɾ] or [[khɑř]

1.2.11. /y/

Arabic and English articulation of /y/ is equivalent, and in prevocalic positions it causes no problem for Arabic speakers. For postvocalic problems, see Dipthongs, Section 1.2.15.

1.2.12. /l/

English has only one /l/ phoneme, which varies in articulation according to environment:

clear /l/ before a front vowel or /y/:

leave [liv]
lit [lIt]
value [vælyu]

velar /l/, the English dark /l/:

medial + unstressed vowel:	telephone	[tɛɬəfon]
finally:	fill	[fIɬ]
before a back vowel:	lose	[ɬuz]
syllabically:	beetle	[biṭ̩]

palatized (or velarized) /l/ before /y/:

million [mIl̩yən]

dental /l/ before /θ/ and /ð/:

health [hɛl̪θ]
fill the cup [fIl̪ðəkʌp]

Arabic has two separate /l/ phonemes: a clear /l/, like that in leave, and a velar /l/, like that in fill. An Arabic speaker tends to use only one of his /l/ phonemes, the clear /l/, in all positions when speaking English, thus pronouncing certain words with a foreign accent.

1.2.13. Vowels

As can be seen in Chart III, many of the vowel sounds in English and Arabic have similar points of articulation.

Chart III

English Vowels			
	FRONT	CENTRAL	BACK
HIGH	i I		u U
MID	(e) (ɛ)	ə	(o)
LOW	(æ)	ɑ	(ɔ)

Arabic Vowels		
	FRONT	BACK
HIGH	ii i	uu u
LOW	a aa	

Sounds in circles are not phonemic in Arabic.

Arabic /aa/ ranges from [æ:] to [ɑ:]. /a/ ranges from [æ] to [ə] to [ɑ]. In some local dialects one even hears [ɔ] for /aa/. In addition, most Arabic dialects contain /ee/ (i.e., [e:]), and /oo/ ([o:]), which are (unglided) monophthongs.

English Dipthongs	ɑI	ɑU	ɔI

In addition to these three traditional diphthongs, other English vowels have been considered to be diphthongal in nature, as follows:

/i/ → [ij] /u/ → [uw]
/e/ → [ej] /o/ → [ow]

In this book we will treat only /ɑI/, /ɑU/ and /ɔI/ as diphthongs, but spell them /ɑy/, /ɑw/ and /ɔy/.

Front, Central, Back, High, Mid, and Low refer to the position of the tongue in the mouth. The point at which the tongue is closest to the roof of the mouth is the point of articulation.

In both languages, back vowels are pronounced with lip rounding; front and central vowels are not. Examples:

/e/ as in 'bait'
/ə/ as in 'but'
/o/ as in 'boat'

The proper pronunciation of vowels is one of the most difficult aspects of English phonology for the Arabic speaker to learn. This is because English has more vowels, glides, and diphthongs than Arabic, and because the vowel structures of the two languages are quite different. A phoneme, that is, a class of sounds in one language, may correspond to an allophonic variant of a phoneme, that is, to a particular sound in a limited environment (such as before a velar consonant) in the other language. It often proves difficult for any speaker to learn to produce such phonetically conditioned sounds in other environments.

1.2.14. Problems

	English Phoneme		Description of the Problems
1)	/i/	beet	This vowel is somewhat lower than the high, tense Arabic /ii/.
2)	/I/	bit	In Arabic this vowel is pronounced as [ɛ] under certain conditions. Hence an Arabic speaker has some difficulty in hearing /I/ and /ɛ/ as separate sounds. Distinctions such as in bit/bet may be confusing.
3)	/e/	vacation	/e/, /ɛ/, and /æ/ are all allophonic sounds in Arabic. The Arabic speaker must learn to produce them independently in all environments. He will have difficulty in learning to distinguish them, as in: /e/ - /ɛ/ in bait/bet /æ/ - /ɛ/ in bat/bet
4)	/ɛ/	bet	For description of problem see 1.2.14.2. and 1.2.14.3.
5)	/æ/ /ə/ /ɑ/		These vowels of English are subphonemic in Arabic. [ɑ] as in the English cot, is the backed version of Arabic short vowel /a/. It occurs only in syllables preceding a velarized consonant. [ə], as in Eng-

	English Phoneme	Description of the Problems
		lish cut is the front version of the same phoneme. [ɑ:], as in the English father (but more prolonged) is the backed version of the Arabic long vowel /aa/. It too occurs preceding velarized consonants. [æ:] as in English can (but more prolonged) is the front version of the long vowel. The Arabic speaker may have difficulty in hearing these as separate phonemes, and in learning to produce /a/ without concomitant velarization.
6)	/ʊ/ cook	The Arabic short /u/ is like the vowel in English put. However, in certain positions it becomes an [o] somewhat like the vowel in boat, but without the [w] off-glide. The Arabic speaker may not at first distinguish these vowels, as in book and boat.
7)	/ɔ/ taught	This vowel does not occur in Arabic. An Arabic speaker will confuse it with /o/ as in low/law.

1.2.15. Diphthongs

Diphthongs are one-syllable sounds. They consist of a main vowel immediately followed by a fronted or rounded off-glide. None of the following diphthongs occur in Arabic.

	Diphthong	Description of the Problems
1)	/i/ = [ij] seen	Arabic speakers have trouble learning to produce the off-glide [-j].
2)	/e/ = [ej] fate	English /e/ is diphthongal in stressed positions. An Arabic speaker is likely not to hear the [-j] off-glide. This is why he may confuse the diphthong in bait with the shorter vowel in bet.
3)	/u/ = [uw] moon	This sound is like the Arabic long vowel /uu/, except that the Arabic vowel does not have a [-w] off-glide. Learning the glide may be difficult.
4)	/o/ = [ow] sow	This sound has no Arabic equivalent.

Diphthong	Description of the Problems
	An Arabic speaker will have difficulty both in hearing the off-glide and in distinguishing the main vowel from /ɑ/ and /ɔ/.
5) /ɑy/ bind /ɑw/ bound	The problem with these diphthongs is that they are similar to sounds in Arabic. Following the rules for the main vowels /ɑ/, /æ/, and /ə/ (See preceding section) the normal (non-velarized) pronunciation in Arabic is /æy/ and /æw/. The Arabic speaker is likely to use his own version of the back diphthongs in English, as in [kʰæ̝ʷ] cow, and [pʰæ̝ʸ] pie.
6) /ɔy/ boy	Since [ɔ] simply does not occur in Arabic any aspect of its pronunciation is likely to be difficult for the Arabic speaker.

1.2.16. English vowel length is conditioned by a variety of factors.

1) Stressed vowels are longer than unstressed vowels.
2) Stressed vowels are longer when they occur:
   a. before voiced consonants:

   seed/seat
   goad/goat

   b. finally in a phrase:

   He should go.
   He should go home.

   c. preceding /m/, /n/, /ŋ/, /l/ and a voiced consonant (in contrast to /m/, /n/, /ŋ/, /l/ and a voiceless consonant):

   crumble/crumple
   ones/once
   songs/songstress
   killed/kilt

In Arabic, which uses a system of long and short vowels, length is inherent to the vowel itself. Since the Arabic system does not apply in English, the Arabic speaker will tend to pronounce all English vowels with approximately equal length. This results in clipped-sounding speech.

1.2.17. In unstressed positions English vowels tend to be reduced. Thus:

/i/	— [I]	beautiful
/e/	— [I]	Monday, solace

Unstressed /ə/ occurs in any position. Most unstressed vowels are schwa. It is the neutral vowel:

again
potato
a
the
from

In all cases involving vowel reduction, the Arabic speaker will produce instead the citation form, since vowels in Arabic are not reduced; they are always pronounced clearly and with their full value.

1.2.18. Since, in English, /r/ is not a true consonant, but a retroflex vowel functioning as a consonant, Vowel + /r/ produces a diphthongal glide:

/-Ir/	fear
/-ɛr/	care
/-ɔr/	for
/-ur/	poor
/-ar/	far

When /r/ is added to a diphthong, a complex triphthongal glide is produced:

/-eyr/	mayor
/-ayr/	fire
/-ɔyr/	foyer
/-awr/	hour
/-owr/	blower

Inasmuch as an Arab has difficulty with /r/, he will have problems with this glide.

1.3. Consonant Clusters: Syllables

1.3.1. Any single consonant which causes difficulty will also give trouble in clusters. Single consonant problems are treated in Sections 1.2.1. to 1.2.12. Only those problems peculiar to clustering are considered here.

1.3.2. In Arabic, no more than two consonants may occur together in a cluster. Clusters never occur in initial position in a word. To prevent clusters of more than two consonants, an epen-

thetic vowel is inserted between two of the consonants. It is quite difficult for the Arabic speaker to cease using this device when speaking English. Mistakes such as the following are common:

skate	*[sIket]
gleam	*[gəlim]
true	*[təru]
express	*[ɛksəpres]

1.3.3. Gemination

Clusters of two identical consonants occur frequently in Arabic; any consonant in the language can occur geminated. Double consonants have limited occurrence in English and are not normally phonemic within the word, as they are in Arabic. They can occur in English across word boundaries:

grab bag	[græbbæg]
at tea	[ætthi]

and with some words:

thinness	[θInnɛs]	unnerve	[ənnərv]
cattail	[khæt:ejɬ]	bookkeeper	[buk:i:pr̩]

The Arabic speaker tends to geminate consonants in English, assigning double value to any consonant which has a double spelling:

cattle	[kæt·l]
butter	[bət:ʌr]

1.4.1. Handwriting

The Classical Arabic writing system (generally called the Arabic alphabet) consists of 28 letters and a number of signs. Some of the principal features of this system are as follows:

1) The writing runs from right to left.

2) Normally only the consonants and the long vowels are indicated, except in dictionaries, books for beginners, and in the Qur'an.

3) There are no capital letters or italics.

4) Most of the letters have a cursive connection to preceding and following letters in the same word.

5) There are no meaningful differences between the printed, typed, and handwritten forms of the letters.

6) Most of the letters have four variant shapes, depending on their cursive connection to neighboring letters.

7) Some of the letters are identical in basic form, and are distinguished from one another only by arrangements of dots. See /b/, /t/, /θ/ below.

1.4.2. The alphabet

The following list shows the letters of the Arabic alphabet in the shape they have when they stand alone, that is, not connected to a preceding or following letter. The order is that adopted by most dictionaries and other alphabetical listings.

Symbol	Arabic name	Arabic letter
/ʔ/, /aa/	ʔalif	ا
/b/	baaʔ	ب
/t/	taaʔ	ت
/θ/	θaaʔ	ث
/j/*	jiim	ج
/ḥ/	ḥaaʔ	ح
/x/	xaaʔ	خ
/d/	daal	د
/ð/	ðaal	ذ
/r/	raaʔ	ر
/z/	zaay	ز
/s/	siin	س
/š/	šiin	ش
/ṣ/	ṣaad	ص
/ḍ/	ḍaad	ض
/ṭ/	ṭaaʔ	ط
/ẓ/	ẓaaʔ	ظ
/ʕ/	ʕayn	ع
/ɣ/	ɣayn	غ
/f/	faaʔ	ف
/q/	qaaf	ق
/k/	kaaf	ك
/l/	laam	ل

*Henceforth /j/ will be used rather than /dʒ/.

Symbol	Arabic name	Arabic letter
/m/	miim	م
/n/	nuun	ن
/h/	haa?	ه
/w/, /uu/	waaw	و
/y/, /ii/	yaa?	ي

1.4.3. Numerals

The numerals are as follows:

٠	١	٢	٣	٤	٥	٦	٧	٨	٩
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

They are combined as shown below:

1959	١٩٥٩	58.4	٥٨,٤
1376	١٣٧٦	75%	٧٥٪
2,228	٢٢٢٨	2/9/55	٢/٩/٥٥

Note that the numbers are written from left to right.

1.4.4. Handwriting Problems

a. ‹b›, ‹f›, ‹k›, ‹k›, ‹l›, ‹e›: These letters have curving lines which double back, forming loops. Arabic writing does not have such loops. Curved lines extend in one direction, as in ل /l/, and in ك /k/. Learning to form loops may be difficult for an Arabic student.

b. ‹a›, ‹c›, ‹d›, ‹g›: These letters have an upward curve, which is immediately retraced downward and back. This type of stroke is not used in Arabic, and will prove difficult for the student.

c. ‹f› ‹g› ‹j› ‹p› ‹q› ‹y› ‹z›: There are no loops such as these below the line in Arabic. Learning to form them may be difficult.

d. Arabic writing does not have capital letters. The Arab student will be inclined to forget to use them.

1.5. Punctuation constitutes a major problem for Arabic students. English punctuation is used by some Arabs, however. Since punctuation is not taught as part of the study of Arabic, punctuation usage is quite inconsistent.

a. Question mark: This is quite easy for Arabs to master, since its occurrences are well defined. Often, at first, a student may be inclined to use a period.

b. Exclamation mark: Like the question mark, this device is fairly easy to learn.

c. Period: This is frequently used in Arabic. However, if the Arabic student forgets to use it in Arabic, he'll probably also forget it in English.

d. Abbreviations and initials: These have only recently begun to be used in Arabic, and not on a wide scale. Individuals using them may punctuate them with periods at their own discretion. Learning proper usage in English may constitute a problem.

e. Semicolon (between statements): The semicolon is not used in Arabic. Learning it should not be too difficult, since there is no interference from Arabic.

f. Colon (equation): Like the semicolon, it should not be too difficult.

g. Hyphen (dividing words at the end of a line; connecting words): The hyphen is not used in Arabic.

h. Quotation marks: The French form (« ... ») is commonly used, though the English form does occur. Remembering to use the proper English form may prove difficult.

i. Single Quotation marks (quotations within quotations): Single quotation marks are as confusing as double quotation marks.

j. Parentheses (supplementing information): Exact usage in Arabic is not well defined. Some writers use parentheses for quotations. Their usage in English may be confusing.

k. Square Brackets (editorial insertion): Brackets are not frequently used, and may be confusing.

l. Ellipsis (...omissions): Ellipsis is used in Arabic and English, and should not be difficult.

m. Comma (used after yes and no, in a series, before a direct quotation, before words and clauses in apposition, in connecting sentences, and before non-restrictive clauses): Commas are never used in Arabic after yes or no, before a direct quotation, or in connecting sentences. Otherwise, usage is very inconsistent. It is a large problem for the Arabic student learning English.

PART 2: MORPHOLOGY

2.1.0. Parts of Speech

2.1.1. There are considered to be three parts of speech in Arabic: nouns, verbs, and particles.

Nouns are inflected for a) gender, b) determination, c) number, and d) case.

Gender is masculine or feminine. If the noun is animate, then gender corresponds to natural sex; thus /rajul/ man, and /jamal/ camel are masculine, while /ʔumm/ mother and /faras/ mare are feminine. There are also many pairs where one member is marked as feminine by the feminine suffix a (full form, atun), e,g, /muʕallim/ teacher (masculine) and /muʕallima/ teacher (feminine), /kalb/ dog, /kalba/ bitch.

For inanimate nouns, feminine nouns generally have a feminine suffix while masculine nouns are unmarked, e.g. /bayt/ house (masculine) and /sāʕa/ hour, clock (feminine); another pair: /jāmiʕ/ mosque (masculine) and /jāmiʕa/ university (feminine)

Because of the lack of neuter gender, the Arabic speaker will often use he or she for it, e.g.:

The camel died for he fell in a ditch
The mare died for she fell in a ditch.

Determination. Every noun is definite or indefinite. It is definite if a) it has the definite article prefix /ʔal-/, e.g. /ʔalbaytu/ the house; 2) it is modified by a following definite noun in the genitive, e.g. /baytu ʔal-mudīri/ the house of the director, the director's house; 3) it has a pronoun suffix, e.g. /baytuhu/ his house; or 4) it is a proper noun, e.g. /lubnānu/ Lebanon, /ʔalqāhiratu/ Cairo, /muḥammadun/ Muhammad (as opposed to /muḥammadun/ praised, praiseworthy). All other nouns are indefinite and, with certain exceptions, must receive a suffixed -n after the case inflection; compare:

ʔalbaytu	baytun
the house	a house

the name of the director				one of the director's names			
ʔismu	ʔal-	mudīri		ʔismun	min	ʔasmāʔ	ʔal-mudīri
name	the	director		name	from	names	the director

Use of this inflectional suffix /-n/ is called nunation in Arabic grammar.

Number. Arabic nouns have three numbers: singular, dual (two items), and plural (more than two items). The unmarked form is singular, e.g. /bayt/ house. Dual is marked by the suffix /-āni/ (nominative), e.g. /baytāni/ two houses, /sāʕatāni/ two hours. Plural number is indicated in either of two ways: 1) by suffixation, -ūn for masculine plural nouns and -āt for feminine plural nouns:

/muʕallimūn/ teachers (masculine)
/muʕallimāt/ teachers (feminine)

This is called the sound plural in Arabic grammer. 2) by internal vowel change:

/bayt/ house /madīna/ city
/buyūt/ houses /mudun/ cities

These are like English plural patterns foot-feet, mouse-mice, etc. They are traditionally referred to as broken plurals in Arabic. Both sound and broken plurals are common in Arabic nouns.

Case. Arabic nouns have three cases: nominative, ending in -u, genitive, in -i, and accusative in -a. The same endings are found in broken plurals:

	Singular the house	Plural the houses	Inflection
Nom:	ʔalbaytu	ʔalbuyūtu	-u
Gen:	ʔalbayti	ʔalbuyūti	-i
Acc:	ʔalbayta	ʔalbuyūta	-a

In the dual and the sound plural there are only two different endings, one for nominative and one for non-nominative:

	Singular the teacher (m.)	Dual the 2 teachers (m.)	Plural the teachers (m.)
Nom:	ʔalmuʕallimu	ʔalmuʕallimāni	ʔalmuʕallimūna
Gen:	ʔalmuʕallimi	ʔalmuʕallimayni	ʔalmuʕallimīna
Acc:	ʔalmuʕallima		

	Singular the teacher (f.)	Dual the 2 teachers (f.)	Plural the teachers (f.)
Nom:	ʔalmuʕallimatu	ʔalmuʕullimatāni	ʔalmuʕallimātun
Gen:	ʔalmuʕallimati	ʔalmuʕallimatayni	ʔalmuʕallimātin
Acc:	ʔalmuʕallimata		

Functions of Case

The cases have the following syntactic functions:
Nominative: subject in both verbal sentence and equational sentence; predicate in equational sentence; citation form (i.e. in titles, captions, lists, etc.):

Subject of Verbal Sentence:
The captain came.

jāʔ	ʔal- ḍābiṭu
came	the captain

Arabic speakers might be influenced by word order in Arabic which prefers the verb to precede the subject:

Came the captain. instead of The captain came.

Subject and Predicate in an Equational Sentence:

The officer is Iraqi.

ʔal- ḍābiṭu	ʕirāqiyyun	
the officer	Iraqi	

"A Strange Tale."

qissatun	ɣarībatun	(Citation Form: Title)
story	strange	

The Arabic speaker might be inclined to put the adjective after the noun as in Arabic:

Tale strange. rather than A Strange Tale.

Genitive:

Object of Preposition:

The officer is in the office.

ʔal- ḍābiṭu	fī	ʔal- maktabi
the officer	in	the office

Second Noun in a Noun Noun Phrase:

Who is the director of the school?

man	mudīru	ʔal- madrasati
who	director	the school

Accusative:

Direct Object of Verb:

I know the officer.

ʔaʕrifu	ʔal- ḍābiṭa
I know	the officer

Modification (i.e., adverbial function):

I know the officer well.

ʔaʕrifu	ʔal- ḍābiṭu	jayyidan
I know	the officer	good (= manner)

He arrived in the morning.

wasala	ṣabāḥan
he arrived	morning (= time)

He fled out of fear.

haraba	xawfan
he fled	fear (= cause: out of fear)

He is older than I am.

huwa	ʔakbaru	sinnan	minnī
he	bigger	age	from me (= specification: as to age)

The accusative is also found on the subject of an equational sentence that is introduced by the conjunctions /ʔinna/ verily; that or /ʔanna/ that; compare:

I have a question.
ʕindī | su?ālun
with me | question (subject = nominative)

I have a question.
?inna | ʕindi | su?ālan
verily | with me | question (subject = accusative)

N.B.: Case inflections, being short vowels, are not normally indicated in Arabic publications, since short vowel signs are generally omitted. In this book also, case inflection is omitted, word order alone being quite sufficient to indicate syntactic function.

Semantic Features: Human/Non-Human

It is important in Arabic syntax to distinguish between human and non-human nouns, since there are two corresponding different rules of agreement. That is, adjectives, pronouns and verbs agree with the nouns they refer to in person, number and gender (and, for attributive adjectives, in definiteness as well). In the sentence:

The pretty girl forgot her books.
nasiyat | ?al- fatāt | ?al- jamīla | kutubahā
she forgot | the girl | the pretty | books her

The pronoun suffix /-hā/ and the verb /nasiyat/ are both third person, feminine, singular, and the adjective /jamīla/ is third person feminine singular definite, all agreeing with / al- fatāt/, which is third, feminine, singular, definite.

If the noun in its singular form has a human referent (refers to a single human being), then in its plural form it is modified by plural adjectives, pronouns, verbs:

They are senior officers.
hum | ḍubbāt | kibār
they (m. pl.) | officers | big (m. pl.)

They are pretty girls.
hunna | fatayāt | jamīlāt
they (f. pl.) | girls | pretty (f. pl.)

Arabic speakers might make the adjective plural if the subject is plural, as is done in Arabic:

The seniors officers...

All other plural nouns take feminine singular agreement:

Many European delegations attended.
ḥaḍurat | wufūd | ?urobbiyya | kaθīra
she attended | delegations | European (f.s.) | many (f.s.)

The basic causes are...

?al- ?asbāb	?al- ?asāsiyya		hiya...
the causes	the basic	(f.s.)	she

All other plural nouns take feminine singular agreement in Arabic. The Arabic speaker might say:

The principal causes is...

Other Inflected Words

In the discussion above, a noun is defined, in effect, as a word inflected by gender, determination, number, and case. Adjectives, pronouns, demonstrative and relative pronouns, interrogative pronouns, participles (also called verbal adjectives), infinitives (usually called verbal nouns, sometimes gerunds), and numerals also show these inflections, and so they are considered to be subclasses of nouns. However, they show the following variations:

a) Adjectives are inflected for degree:

1) This is a big delegation.

hāðā	wafd	kabīr
this	delegation	big

2) This is a bigger delegation.

hāðā	wafd	?akbar
this	delegation	bigger

3) This delegation is bigger than the other one.

hāðā	?al- wafd	?akbar	min	?al-	?āxar
this	the delegation	bigger	from	the	other

4) This is the biggest delegation.

hāðā	huwa	?al- wafd	?al- ?akbar
this	he	the delegation	the bigger

That is, the comparative form is of the shape /?akbar/; if indefinite it has comparative meaning (1, 2, 3 above), while if definite (4 above) it has superlative meaning.

b) Pronouns show distinctions of person, number, and gender; they are always definite. Pronouns may be independent or suffixed; independent pronouns are used as subject or predicate in equational sentences:

I am he.	
?anā	huwa
I	he

Where are you from?		
min	?ayna	?anta
from	where	you

The suffixed forms are used as objects of verbs or prepositions, or possessors of nouns:

Have you seen him today?		
hal	ra?aytahu	?alyawm
(interrogation)	you saw him	today

42

He studied his lesson.
daras | darsahu
he studied | his lesson

An Arabic speaker might be inclined to place the pronoun after the noun in English if it is possesive:

He studied lesson his.

The independent pronoun provides emphasis when used in apposition to a pronoun suffix or after a verb:

What is your name?	What is your name?
mā- smuka	mā- smuka | ?anta
what your name	what your name | you
They were killed.	They were killed.
qutilū	qutilū | hum
they were killed	they were killed | they

English achieves emphasis through stress and intonation (indicated above by underlining), while Arabic does this by redundant use of the pronoun. The personal pronouns are:

Person	Singular Independent/Suffix	Dual I/S	Plural I/S
1	?anā {-nī (verbs) / -ī (others)}	———	naḥnu -nā
2 masculine	?anta -ka	?antumā -kumā	?antum
2 feminine	?anti -ki		?antunna -kunna
3 masculine	huwa -hu	?antum -kum	hum -hum
3 feminine	hiya -hā	?antunna -kunna	hunna -hunna

c) Demonstrative Pronouns differ from Pronouns in that they are only third person and always definite; they also indicate relative nearness or remoteness in space or time, e.g. /hāðā/ points to something near the speaker or near the person addressed: this, that, while /ðālika/ indicates something removed from both the speaker and the person addressed: that (over there). The dual forms are rare, and the plural forms are of common gender: see the chart on the top of the next page.

Demonstrative pronouns may serve the same clause functions as any noun; they may also be used attributively, in which use they precede a noun defined by the definite article /?al/. For

	Singular	Plural
masculine	hāðā this, that	hā?ula?i these, those
feminine	hāðihi this, that	
masculine	ðālika that	?ulā?ika those
feminine	tilka that	

example in this sentence:

Who is this man?
man | hāðā | ?al- rajul
who | this | the man

While English and Arabic both have equivalents of this and that, their distribution is different:

	English	Arabic
Near me	this	hāðā
Near you	that	hāðā
Near him	that	ðālika

Thus, the Arabic speaker might say:

How do you like that shirt I am wearing?

d) Relative Pronouns differ from Pronouns in that they are all third person; they take third-person agreement:

I'm the one who said that.
?anā | ?allaðī | qāl | ðālika
I | who | he said | that

The relative pronoun /?allaðī/ who is exclusively definite, indeed, it begins with the definite article /?al-/ while the indefinite relative pronouns /man/ anyone, who, whoever, and /mā/ that which are indefinite. The forms of /?allaðī/ are charted on the next page.

e) Interrogative Pronouns differ from Pronouns in that they are exclusively third person and exclusively indefinite. They are: /man/ who? and /?ayy/ which? /man/ is uninflected, but /?ayy/ is inflected for case and nunation (see 2.1.1. b.). The

who, he who	Singular	Dual	Plural
masculine	ʔallaðī	nom: ʔallaðāni gen/acc: ʔallaðayni	ʔallaðīna
feminine	ʔallatī	nom: ʔallatāni gen/acc: ʔallatayni	ʔallawāti

interrogative phrase must be initial in the sentence:

Whom did you see?
man | ra?aytum
who | you saw

Whom did you come with?
maʕa | man | ji?ta
with | who | you came

What country are you from?
min | ?ayyi | baladin | ?anta
from | which | country | you

f) Numerals: The cardinal numerals are a subclass of noun in Arabic. They show the same inflections and same functions of nouns, although the syntax of numerals is quite complicated in Arabic. In counting items in Arabic separate rules obtain for one and two, for numbers three through ten, for 11-99, and for 100, 1000 and one million. The portions of the rules that will cause interference are given below, using /kitāb/ book to illustrate.

The Arabic singular noun alone is often used where English uses the numeral one; the Arabic speaker may say a book where the American would say one book (or one book for a book).

After the numerals 3-10, Arabic uses a plural noun as in English:

three books
θalāθa | kutub
three | books

After any numeral larger than ten, the singular is used:

fifteen books
xamsata ʕaʃar | kitab
fifteen | book

twenty-five books
xamsa | wa- ʕiʃrūn | kitāb
five | and twenty | book

After 100, 1,000, and one million the singular is used:

100 books		500 books		
mi?at	kitāb	xams	mi?at	kitāb
100	book	five	hundred	book

In constructions like this, Arabic speakers tend to say five hundred book.

g) Participles denote the doer of an action; they may properly be called verbal adjectives, since they have the same inflections (including those for degree comparison) and fuctions as adjectives; show inflection for voice and, on the semantic level, have the feature of aspect, and may take direct objects.

The forms of the participle are well-defined; for Basic Form verbs, active participles take the pattern CāCiC , e.g. /ðāhib/ going from the verb /ðahab/ to go, and passive participles take the pattern maCCūC , e.g. /maktūb/ written, from the verb /katab/ to write. All Derived Form verbs derive the participles by prefixing /mu-/ to the imperfect stem and changing the stem vowel to /i/ for active voice or to /a/ for passive voice. Illustration, from the Form II verb /ʕallam/ to teach:

Active: /muʕallim/ teaching, one who teaches
Passive: /muʕallām/ taught, one who has been/is being taught

Participles often achieve the status of concrete nouns; for example, /muʕallim/ is also used to mean teacher.

Participles have the meaning either of progressive aspect:

He is going to your office.			
huwa	ðāhib	?ilā	maktabika
he	going	to	your office

Or perfective aspect (completed action, but with present time relevance):

He has written many books.			
huwa	kātib	kutub	kaθīra
he	writing	books	many

This perfective aspect differs from the English present perfect in that it can be used with past time adverbials, while the English present perfect cannot. Thus, English can say:

I have done it today.
I did it yesterday.

But not:

*I have done it yesterday.

Arabic does permit this combination, as in:

He studied his lesson yesterday.

huwa	?al- dāris	darsahu	?amsi
he	the one who has studied	his lesson	yesterday

which means literally *He has studied his lesson yesterday. Arabic speakers naturally make this mistake in English.

Also, English participles precede the noun, like other adjectives:

the written word

When the participle is itself modified, it follows the noun:

letters written by school children

In addition, the participles of verbs of motion or remaining may have predictive (future) meaning:

They are departing tomorrow.

hum	musāfirūn	ɣadan
they	departing	tomorrow

h) Verbal Nouns name the underlying notion of a verb, like English infinitives and gerunds, /?al- muwāfaqa/ to agree, agreeing (n.). Since it is an abstraction, it has no plural. Some verbal nouns, however, assume concrete meaning, in which they may be pluralized, and are then often translated with Latin abstract nouns, e.g. /muwāfaqa/ agreement, /muwāfaqāt/ agreements.

There are many verbal noun patterns for Form I verbs, e.g. /ðahāb/ to go from /ðahab/ he went and /dars/ to study from /daras/ he studied. The Derived Forms, however, have, for the most part, predictable patterns, such as /?islām/ submission from /?aslam/ (Form IV verb) to submit.

Both English and Arabic can expand the verbal noun to a phrase including agent and goal (see 2.1.2. a.):

Salim's killing the thief astonished us.

?adhaʃanā	qatl	Salīmin	?al- luṣṣa
he astonished us	to kill	Salim's	the thief

i) Nominalized Clauses: Clauses may be nominalized by the conjunctions /?an/ and /?anna/, both translated by the conjunction that. These must be considered a sub-class of nouns because they can serve some of the clause functions that nouns do, namely subject (equational sentence or verbal sentence) or object of verb or preposition. In agreement they are third masculine singular. Illustrations:

Subject in Equational Sentence:

It is understood that he will arrive tomorrow.

wa- min	?al- mafhūm	?annahu sayaṣil	ɣadan
and from	the understood	that he he will arrive	tomorrow

Subject of Verb:

You must go with him.

yajib	ʔan	taðhab	maʕahu
it is necessary	that	you go	with him

Object of Verb:

We know that he is a liar.

naʕrif	ʔannahu	kaððāb
we know	that he	liar

Object of Preposition:

We doubt that he will come.

naʃukku	fī	ʔannahu	saya?tī
we doubt	in	that he	he will come

2.1.2. Verbs

Verbs are inflected for a) voice, b) tense, c) mood, d) person, e) number and f) gender.

a) Voice: There are two voices: active, where the subject of the verb is the agent (performer of an act), and passive, where the subject is the goal (recipient of an act). Voice is indicated by internal vowel change:

Some killed and some were killed.

qatal	ʔal- baʕḍ	wa- qutil		ʔal- baʕḍ	
he killed	the some	and he was killed		the some	

A special feature of the Arabic passive construction is that the agent cannot be expressed in it. That is, Arabic cannot say The man was killed by a robber, but only The robber killed the man:

The report was read by many officers who had studied engineering.

qara?	ʔal- taqrīr	kaθīrun	min	ʔal- ḍubbāt		ʔallaðīn
he read	the report	many	from	the officer		who
darasū	ʔal- handasa					
they studied	the engineering					

b) Tense: There are two tenses, the perfect, inflected by means of suffixes, and the imperfect, inflected by suffixes and prefixes; compare (inflection underlined):

they studied	they study
darasū	yadrusūn

The perfect tense denotes completed action: one event or a series of events in a narration. It answers the question What happened? Illustration:

He studied yesterday but still failed the exam today.

daras	kaθīran	ʔal- bāriḥa	wa- maʕa	ðālika	faʃal
he studied	much	yesterday	and with	that	he failed

bi	ʔal- ʔimtiḥān	ʔal- yawm
in	the exam	today

The perfect also denotes priorness or precedence--that is, that the action was completed before the statement concerning it was made:

He arrived today.

waṣal	ʔal- yawm
he arrived	today

Here /ʔal- yawm/ sets the time context in the real world as present time--today; the perfect tense shows that the action has already been completed. Completed action in future time can be expressed by adding /sayakūn qad/, as in:

He will have arrived tomorrow.

sayakūn	qad	waṣal	ɣadan
he will be		he arrived	tomorrow

The imperfect denotes anything but a single completed act or a series of acts in a narration; its primary function is description of a current state or circumstances, answering the question How is the situation? Specifically, the imperfect can be said to denote the following kinds of action:

Habitual action:

You always say that!

dāʔiman	taqūl	ðālika
always	you say	that

Progressive action:

He's studying in the library.

yadrus	fī	ʔal- maktaba
he studies	in	the library

I want to talk to you.

ʔurīd	ʔan	ʔatakallam	maʕaka
I want	that	I talk	with you

Prediction (usually with prefixed /sa-/):

He will arrive tomorrow.

sayaṣil	ɣadan
he will arrive	tomorrow

There's going to be a test tomorrow.

sayakūn	ʔimtiḥān	ɣadan
he will be	test	tomorrow

Generalization:

He reads Arabic well.

yuḥsin	qirāʔa	ʔal- ʕarabiyya
he does well	reading	the Arabic

Stative Meaning: Qualitative verbs--verbs meaning to become/to be a (quality)-have stative meaning in the imperfect:

It is hard for me to explain that.

yaṣʕub	ʕalayya	ʔan	ʔufassir	ðālika
it is hard	on me	that	I explain	that

The Arabic perfect and imperfect tenses are remarkably parallel to the English past and present, with one glaring exception: the English past has not only perfective meaning (completed action), as in He arrived yesterday, but also habitual action, as in He always used to arrive late. It is instructive to compare the past tenses of Arabic /ʕaraf/ and English to know: English I knew is generally progressive in meaning, equivalent to I had knowledge of..., whereas Arabic /ʕaraftu/ means I came to know and is best translated I learned, found out, realized, and only rarely I knew. English I knew will normally be equivalent to Arabic /kuntu ʔaʕrif/ I knew (= was knowing), I used to know.

c) Mood: Only the imperfect tense shows distinction of mood; the four moods, indicated by change in suffix, are:

Indicative: asserts facts (or presumed facts); it has the five meanings listed under imperfect tense above. It is signaled by /-u/ on some forms and /-na/ on others:

The instructor will read while the students listen.

ʔal- mudarris	sayaqraʔu	wa- ʔal- ṭalaba	yastamiʕūna
the instructor	he will read	and the students	they listen

Subjunctive: the subjunctive makes no assertion of fact but denotes an action without regard to completion/non-completion or past/present/future time; it is signaled by the inflections /-a/ instead of /-u/ of the indicative, while those that have /-na/ in the indicative lose the /-na/ in the subjunctive:

I want him to read and them to listen.

ʔurīd	ʔan	yaʔraʔa	huwa	wa- ʔan	yaqraʔū	hum
I want	that	he read	he	and that	they read	they

The subjunctive occurs only after certain particles, such as:

/ʔan/ that:

He has to go.

jajib	ʔan	yaðhaba
it is necessary	that	he go

/li-/, /likay/, /liʔan/ in order that:

He came to attend the conference.

jāʔ	li-	yaḥḍura	ʔal- muʔtamar
he came	in order that he attend		the conference

/lan/ will not:

He will not attend the conference.

lan	yaḥḍura	ʔal- muʔtamar
will not	he attend	the conference

Jussive: the jussive has two quite distinct meanings: 1) indirect command and negative imperative, and 2) completed action--that is, it is equivalent to the perfect tense. It is inflected like the subjunctive except that the /-a/ of the subjunctive is dropped:

Indirect command, usually after /li-/:

Let's go to class now.

li- naðhab	ʔalʔān	ʔilā	ʔal- ṣaff
let we go	now	to	the class

Let whoever doesn't understand raise his hand.

man	lā	yafhamu	li- yarfaʕ	yadahu
who	not	he understands	let he raise	his hand

Negative command after /lā/:

Don't leave tomorrow!

lā	tusāfir	ɣadan
not	you leave	tomorrow

Completed action obtains after the negative /lam/ and in conditional clauses after /ʔin/ if:

He hasn't arrived yet.

lam	yaṣil	baʕdu
did not	he arrives	yet

If you go I'll go.

ʔin	taðhab	ʔaðhab
if	you go	I go

Imperative: the imperative makes a direct command; same inflections as for jussive except that prefixes are omitted:

Go!

ʔiðhab	ʔiðhabī	ʔiðhabū
go (2nd, m.s.)	(f.s.)	(m.pl.)

d) Person: Verbs are inflected for three persons, by suffixes in the perfect tense:

I wrote	you wrote
katubtu	katabta

and by prefixes in the imperfect tense:

I write	you write
?aktubu	taktubu

e) Number: Verbs show all three numbers in the second and third persons (first person has no dual):

he writes	they two write	they write
yaktubu	yaktubāni	yaktubūna

f) Gender: Verbs indicate masculine or feminine gender in the second and third persons; the first person is common gender:

I write	you (m.s.) write	you (f.s.) write
?aktubu	taktubu	taktubīna

Sample Verb Paradigm

		kataba - yaktubu to write				
		Perfect (completed action)	Imperfect (Contemporary Action)			
			Indicative	Subjunctive	Jussive	Imperative
SINGULAR	1	katabtu	?aktubu	?aktuba	?aktub	
	2 m.	katabta	taktubu	taktuba	taktub	?uktub
	2 f.	katabti	taktubīna	taktubī	taktubī	?uktubī
	3 m.	kataba	yaktubu	yaktuba	yaktub	
	3 f.	katabat	taktubu	taktuba	taktub	
DUAL	2 m. / 2 f.	katabtumā	taktubāni	taktubā	taktubā	?uktubā
	3 m.	katabā	yaktubāni	yaktubā	yaktubā	
	3 f.	katabatā	taktubāni	taktubā	taktubā	
PLURAL	1	katabnā	naktubu	naktuba	naktub	
	2 m.	katabtum	taktubūna	taktubū	taktubū	?uktubū
	2 f.	katabtunna	taktubna	taktubna	taktubna	?uktubna
	3 m.	katabū	yaktubūna	yaktubū	yaktubū	
	3 f.	katabna	yaktubna	yaktubna	yaktubna	

Active Participle:	kātibun	having written
Passive Participle:	maktūbun	written
Verbal Noun:	kitābatun	writing, to write

2.1.3. Particles

Particles are words (and prefixes) devoid of any inflection; they are subdivided on the basis of syntactic function into the following groups: a) adverbs, b) prepositions, c) conjunctions, d) interrogatives, e) interjections.

a) Adverbs are relatively few; the most common are /hunā/ here, /hunāka/ there, /ʔalʔāna/ now, /ʔamsi/ yesterday, /ʔayḍan/ also, /faqaṭ/ only, and the negatives /lā/ no, /mā/ not, /lam/ did not, and /lan/ will not.

b) Prepositions include true prepositions, such as /min/ from, /fī/ in, and /ʕalā/ on, and noun-prepositionals, which unlike true prepositions, show inflection for two cases, accusative /-a/ and genitive /-i/; compare:

It's above the table.				It fell from over the table.				
huwa	fawqa	ʔal-	māʔida	waqaʕ	min	fawqi	ʔal-	māʔida
he	over	the	table	he fell	from	over	the	table

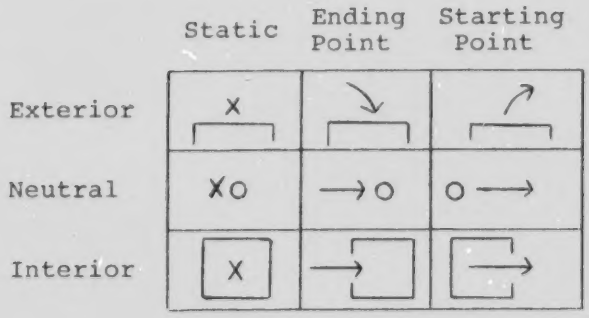
Locative prepositions are often similar to English in meaning.

on	onto	off
at	to	(away) from
in	into	out of

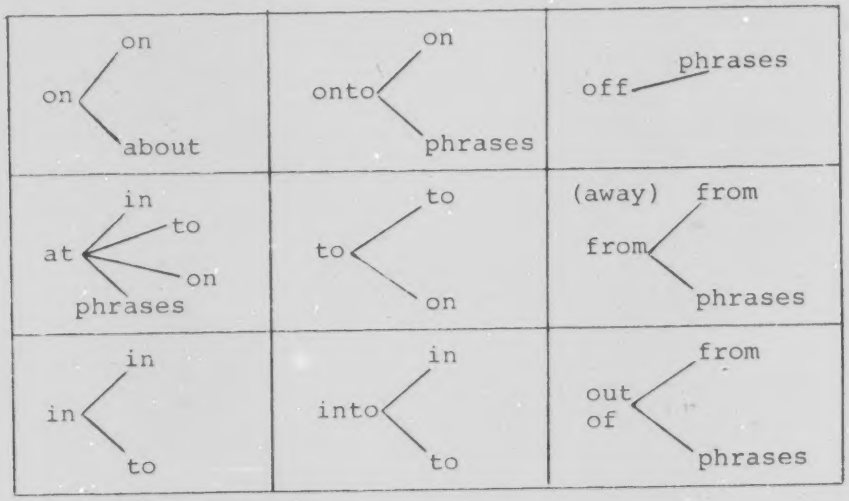
English

ʕalā		
bi	ʔilā	ʕan min
fī bi	fī	min

Arabic



However, when these prepositions do not have the meaning of relative position, several other Arabic words can translate them idiomatically:



c) Conjunctions are exemplified by /wa-/ and, /fa-/ and, and then, /lākinna/ but, /ʔan/ that, /ʔanna/ that, /ʔinna/ indeed; that, and the conditional particles /ʔin/ if, /ʔiðā/ if and /law/ if.

d) Interrogatives are adverbs that signal questions: /kayfa/ how, /matā/ when, /ʔayna/ when, /kam/ how much.

e) Interjections, such as /ʔāhi/ oh!

Under miscellaneous are the vocative particle /yā/ as in /yā fuʔād/ O Fuad! and the verbal particle /qad/ which transforms a perfect tense from narrative to descriptive function, as:

He studied today.			He has studied today.		
daras	ʔal- yawm		qad	daras	ʔal- yawm
he studied	today			he studied	today

and before the imperfect, means perhaps, maybe:

He might study today.

qad	yadrus	ʔal- yawm
perhaps	he studies	today

PART 3: SYNTAX: SENTENCE STRUCTURE

3.0. Introduction

Arabic clauses (sentences) are classified as 1) equational or 2) verbal. The verbal sentence contains a verb:

Joseph arrived.
wasal | yūsuf
he arrived | Joseph

while the equational sentence does not:

Joseph is a student.
yūsuf | ṭālib
Joseph | student

3.0.1. Equational Sentences (ES)

The equational sentence (ES) contains a subject (S) and a predicate (P):

ES = S + P

The equational sentence presents an equation: S = P:

Ahmad is an officer.
ʔaḥmad | ḍābiṭ
Ahmad | officer

or a predication (information P is provided about S):

Ahmad is from Libya.
ʔaḥmad | min lībiyā
Ahmad | from Libya

The subject of the equational sentence is most often definite:

The officer is living in a tent.
ʔal- ḍābiṭ | sākin | fī | xayma
the officer | living | in | tent

If the subject is indefinite, the sentence has existential meaning; the predicate (usually a locative adverb or prepositional phrase) precedes the subject unless the subject is negated by /lā/:

There are also other important questions.
hunāka | ʔayḍan | ʔasʔila | muhimma | ʔuxrā
there | also | questions | important | other

There are two officers in the tent.
fī | ʔal- xayma | ḍābitān
in | the tent | two officers

There are no officers (at all) in this tent.

lā	ḍābiṭ	fī	hādihi	ʔal-	xayma
no	officer	in	this	the	tent

(There's) no doubt about it.

lā	ʃakk	fī	ðālika
no	doubt	in	that

Note that there is no expression of to be (am, is, are) in present time; to be is expressed in past or future time, however: /kān/ he was, and /sayakūn/ he will be, as in:

He was an officer.			He will be an officer.		
kān	ḍābiṭ		sayakūn	ḍābiṭ	
he was	officer		he will be	officer	

(Since these sentences contain verbs, they are both verbal sentences.) Equational sentences may optionally be expanded to include a connecter (C), linking it to a previous sentence; a clause modifier, which is an expression modifying the clause as a whole (M); and/or expressions modifying the subject or predicate (+M):

ES = (C) (M) S(+M) P(+M)

The subject of an ES must be a noun phrase (NP), such as /mudīr ʔal-madrasa/ the director of the school. The predicate may be:

a) NP:

The school director is an officer.

mudīr	ʔal-	madrasa	ḍābiṭ
director	the	school	officer

b) Prepositional Phrase:

The school director is from Texas.

mudīr	ʔal-	madrasa	min	Texas
director	the	school	from	Texas

c) adverb:

The director of the school is over there.

mudīr	ʔal-	madrasa	hunāk
director	the	school	over there

Modifiers may be:

a) NP: apposition:

The school director, Col. Smith, is from Texas.

mudīr	ʔal-	madrasa	ʔal-	zaʕīm	Smith	min	Texas
director	the	school	the	colonel	Smith	from	Texas

b) Prepositional Phrase:

He's an officer from Texas.

huwa	ḍābiṭ	min	Texas
he	officer	from	Texas

c) Clause:

The director, who is an army officer, is from Texas.

?al- mudīr	wa- huwa	ḍābiṭ	fī	?al- jayʃ	min	Texas
the director	and he	officer	in	the army	from	Texas

M (clause modifiers) are usually adverbial expressions, including clauses introduced by adversative conjunctions:

And nevertheless (in spite of that) he is an officer in the army.

wa- maʕa	ðālik	huwa	ḍābiṭ	fī	?al- jayʃ
and with	that	he	officer	in	the army

Inasmuch as he is an officer, he is the director.

wa- bi- mā	?annahu	ḍābiṭ	huwa	?al- mudīr
and in that	that he	officer	he	the director

C (connectors) are conjunctions, such as /wa-/ and, /(wa-) lākinna/, but or however, /?iðā/ if, etc. An example of a fully extended sentence of the type C M S+M P+M:

And, in spite of that, the director who assumed directorship this year has been a teacher for a long time.

wa- maʕ	ðālik	?al- mudīr	?allaðī	tawallā
and with	that	the director	who	he took charge of
C	M	S		

?al- riʔāsa	?al- sanata	muʕallim	min	zamān
the directorship	the year	teacher	from	time
+M		P	+M	

ES word order is inverted to P S when the subject is a nominalized clause (nom-cl):

$$ES = P_{\text{prep-ph}}\ S_{\text{non-cl}}$$

as in:

He must study the ranks.

min	?al-ḍarūriyy	?an	yadrus	?al- rutab
from	the necessary	that	he study	the ranks

3.0.2. Verbal Sentences (VS)

A verbal sentence is one that contains a verb. It may consist of a verb alone, symbolized V, as in:

He fell silent.
sakat
he fell silent

Or verb + subject and object, VSO, as in:

Ahmad saw the officer.

ra?ā	?aḥmad	?al- ḍābiṭ
he saw	Ahmad	the officer

Verbal sentences contain a reference to an agent (usually the subject) and an action (the verb). If the verb is in the perfect tense, as in the examples above, the verb normally precedes the subject; and the sentence tells what happened--that is, its function is narration of completed events.

If the verb is imperfect, as in:

The U.S. Army is composed of the following parts...

?al- jayš	?al- ?amrīkiyy	yata?allaf	min	?al- ?aqsām
the army	the American	it is composed	from	the parts

?al- ?ātiya...
the following

the subject usually precedes the verb, and the sentence generally has a descriptive function.

The verbal sentence may be expanded to include any of the following:

a) A second object (O_2), as in:

They elected the colonel president.

?intaxabū	?al- zaʕīm	ra?īs
they elected	the colonel	president

b) Modifiers (+M), as in:

The Iraqi delegates arrived today, coming from France.

waṣala	?al- yawm	?al- mandūbūn	?al- ʕirāqiyyūn
he arrived	today	the delegates	the Iraqi
V	+M	S	

qādimīn	min	faransā
coming	from	France
	+M	

Modifiers of verbs can be:

a) Noun Phrases (NP):

this morning		to honor, out of respect for...
hāða	?al- ṣabāḥ	?ikrāman
this	the morning	as honor

b) Prepositional Phrases:

afternoon	with his sword
baʕd ʔal- ḍuhr	bi- sayfihi
after the noon	with his sword

c) Adverbs:

now	also
ʔalʔān	ʔayḍan

Adverbs usually signify place, manner, time, instrument, or cause. Modifiers of subjects or objects can be:

a) Noun Phrases: apposition or specification:

as an officer
ḍabiṭan

b) Participles:

coming
qādimīn (masculin plural)

c) Prepositional Phrases

from Libya
min lībiyā
from Libya

d) Clauses:

The officer, having been appointed director of the school, left Damascus without hesitation.

ʔal-	ḍābiṭ	wa-	qad	ʕuyyin	mudīr	ʔal-	madrasa
the	officer	and		he was appointed	director	the	school
S				+M			

ɣādar	ʔal-	ʃam	bidūn	taraddud
he left	Damascus		without	hesitation
V	O		+M	

A peculiar feature of Arabic syntax is encountered in verb-subject agreement. The verb agrees with the subject in terms of person, number, and gender. In:

The officers departed.
ʔal- ḍubbāṭ ɣādarū
the officers departed

both the subject and the verb are third person, masculine, plural. If, however, the verb precedes the subject (the usual order), number agreement is canceled: the verb is always singular, e.g.:

The officers departed.
ɣādar |?al- ḍubbāṭ
he departed |the officers

3.0.3. Interrogatives

Arabic interrogatives are always initial in the sentence, but they follow C (connectors) and M (clause modifiers); the normal sentence word order will be changed if necessary. Thus:

Who is this officer?
man|hāðā|?al- ḍābiṭ man = S
who|this|the officer

Whom did they kill?
man|qatalū man = O
who|they killed

What class are you in?
fi|?ayy|ṣaff|?ant ?ayy = object of preposition
in|what|class|you

Who came?
man|jā? man = S
who|he came

3.0.4. Conditional Sentences (CS)

Arabic conditional sentences are different enough from English, and regular enough, to merit separate mention. Arabic CS begin with one of these conditional particles:

/?in/ if it should be that, if
/?iðā/ if it should be that, if, when
/law/ if it were that, if

An attempt has been made to translate them in such a way as to show that the first two denote conditions that are realizable, possible, or real, while law, the third one, denotes conditions that are unrealizable, strictly hypothetical, and unreal (condition contrary to fact). All three must be followed by verbs in the perfect tense; the verb in the result clause is usually also in the perfect tense. Compare:

If he says that (if he should say that) I'll kill him.
?in|qāl |ðālik|qataltuhu
if |he said|that |I killed him

If he says that, I'll kill him.
?iðā|qāl |ðālik|qataltuhu
if |he said|that |I killed him

If he were to say that, I would kill him.
law|qāl |ðālik|laqataltuhu
if |he said|that |I killed him

If he (has) said that, I will kill him.

?in	kān	qad*	qāl	ðālik	qataltuhu
if	he was		he said	that	I killed him

If he had said that, I would have killed him.

law	kān	qad	qāl	ðālik	laqataltuhu
if	he was		he said	that	I killed him

Variations are possible; for example, after /?in/ or /?iðā/ the result clause may be introduced by /fa-/ and contain any verb form desired:

If he says that, it will be fine.

?in	qāl	ðālik	fa-	sa-	yakūn	ḥasan
if	he said	that	it	will	be	good

Also, /law/ may be followed by an imperfect tense verb to mean <u>if only</u>..., <u>would that</u>...!:

If only he knew how much I love him!

law	yaʕrif	kam	ʔuḥibbuhu
if	he knows	how much	I love him

3.0.5. Topic Comment

While the normal word order of Arabic clauses has been described in the previous sections, it is possible to extract any noun phrase from its normal position and focus special attention on it by putting it first in the sentence. First, the word or phrase to be highlighted is replaced by a pronoun agreeing with it, then the item to be highlighted is placed after /ʔammā/ <u>as for</u>, becoming the topic, and the sentence is placed after /fa-/ <u>and then</u>, becoming a comment about the topic. For example, in:

The president of the university submitted his resignation to the Board of Regents.

qaddama	raʔīs	ʔal-	jāmiʕa	ʔistaqālatahu
he presented	president	the	university	his resignation

ʔilā	majlis	ʔal-	ḥukkām
to	council	the	governors

any of the nouns or noun phrases (except the first noun of a noun phrase) can be made a topic, as follows (the topic and the replacive pronoun are underlined):

1) As for the university, its president submitted his resignation to the Board of Regents.

ʔammā	<u>ʔal- jamiʕa</u>	fa-	qaddama	raʔīsuhā
as for	<u>the university</u>	well	he presented	<u>its</u> president

*<u>qad</u> in untranslatable. See Part 4: Verbs.

?istaqālatahu	?ilā	majlis	?al- ḥukkām
his resignation	to	council	the governors

2) As for the president of the university, he presented his resignation to the Board of Regents.

?ammā	raʔīs	?al- jāmiʕa	fa- qaddama
as for	president	the university	well he presented

?istaqālatahu	?ilā	majlis	?al- ḥukkām
his resignation	to	council	the governors

3) As for the resignation, the president of the university submitted it to the Board of Regents.

?ammā	?istaqālatuhu	fa-	qaddamahā	raʔīs
as for	his resignation	well	he presented it	president

?al- jāmiʕa	?ilā	majlis	?al- ḥukkām
the university	to	council	the governors

4) As for the Board of Regents, the president of the university submitted his resignation to it.

?ammā	majlis	?al- ḥukkām	fa- qaddama	raʔīs
as for	council	the governors	well he presented	president

?al- jāmiʕa	?istaqālatahu	?ilayhi
the university	his resignation	to it

It is possible to delete /?ammā...fa-/, leaving everything else as is; to illustrate with sentence 1) above:

As for the university, its president submitted his resignation to the Board of Regents.

?al- jāmiʕa	qaddama	raʔīsuhā	?istaqālatahu
the university	he presented	its president	his resignation

?ilā	majlis	?al- ḥukkām
to	council	the governors

The topic-comment sentence is extremely common, both with and without /?ammā...fa-/. Here is an illustration using an equational sentence:

a) Original Sentence:

The officer's letter is very important.

risāla	?al- ḍābiṭ	hāmma	jiddan
letter	the officer	important	very

b) With /?ammā...fa/:

As for the officer, his letter is very important.

?ammā	?al-	ḍābiṭ	fa-	risālatuhu	hāmma	jiddan
as for	the	officer	well	his letter	important	very

c) With /?ammā...fa-/ deleted:

As for the officer, his letter is very important.

?al-	ḍābiṭ	risālatuhu	hāmma	jiddan
the	officer	his letter	important	very

3.0.6. Clauses As Modifiers

1) Relative Clauses

The clause as a unit may serve as a modifier. When introduced by a relative pronoun, clauses modify nouns:

The officer who succeeded was from my country.

kān	?al-	ḍābiṭ	?allaðī	najaḥa	min	baladī
he was	the	officer	who	he succeeded	from	my country

/?allaðī najaḥa/ who succeeded is a relative clause modifying /?al- ḍābiṭ/.

An important difference between English and Arabic relative clauses is that while in English the relative pronoun performs a syntactic function within the relative clause and is an integral part of it, the Arabic relative clause is syntactically complete without the relative pronoun; this necessitates the existence of a pronominal reference to the antecedent within the clause:

Where is the officer whom you know?

?ayna	?al-	ḍābiṭ	?allaðī	taʕrifuhu
where	the	officer	who	you know him

In this example whom is the object of you know, while /taʕrifuhu/ you know him is a 'complete sentence' in itself, and the relative /?allaðī/ is not a part of either clause. Another illustration, where the object of a preposition is the same as the antecedent:

Where is the officer with whom you came?

?ayna	?al-	ḍābiṭ	?allaðī	ji?ta	maʕahu
where	the	officer	who	you came	with him

The Arabic speaker will tend in English to use the Arabic structure, such as Where is the officer whom you know him? and Where is the officer who(m) you came with him?

2) And Clauses

The Arabic conjunction /wa-/ and both coordinates and subordinates. It can coordinate phrases or clauses:

John and his father left Baghdad yesterday and arrived today in Amman.

ɣādara	baɣdād	ʔamsi	ḥannā	wa-	ʔabūhu	wa-
he left	Baghdad	yesterday	John	and	his father	and

waṣalā	ʔal- yawm	ʔilā	ʕammān
they two arrived	today	to	Amman

It can also subordinate phrases (rare in modern Literary Arabic) or clauses:

And on the next day, which was Thursday, they visited the Director's home.

wa-	ʔal-yawm	ʔal-	θānī	wa-	huwa	yawm	ʔal-	xamīs
and	the day	the	second	and	it	day	the	Thursday

zārū	bayt	ʔal-	mudīr
they visited	house	the	director

On Friday, having visited the Director's house, they returned to the capital.

wa-	yawm	ʔal-	jumʕa	wa-	qad	zārū	bayt
and	day	the	Friday	and		they visited	house

ʔal-	mudīr	ʕādū	ʔilā	ʔal-	ʕāṣima
the	director	they returned	to	the	capital

These clauses introduced by subordinating /wa-/ are adjectival, modifying nouns. They account for what seems to an English-speaker to be an over-abundance of "and's".

3.0.7. Clause Structure: Modification

Generally, any form-class of Arabic can modify any other. For example, a noun can modify:

a noun:

a baby doctor		hot days	
ṭabīb	ʔaṭfāl	ʔayyām	ḥarr
doctor	infants	days	heat

an adjective:

tall in stature		very tall	
ṭawīl	ʔal- qāma	ṭawīl	jiddan
tall	the body	tall	earnestness

a pronoun:

We, the Arabs.	
naḥnu	ʔal- ʕarab
we	the Arabs

a verb:

He arrived this year.	
waṣala	ʔal- sanata
he arrived	the year

prepositional phrase: almost as far as the middle

taqrīban	ḥattā	ʔal- wasaṭ
approximation	until	the middle

a clause: And, in fact, he did just that.

wa-	fiʕlan	faʕala	ðālika
and	fact	he did	that

Nouns can be modified by:

Nouns (See above)

Adjectives:

distant islands

juzur	baʕīda
islands	far

pronouns:

their islands

jusuruhum

their islands

adverbs:

And this officer also is from Egypt.

wa	hāðā	ʔal- ḍābiṭ	ʔayḍan	min	miṣr
and	this	the officer	also	from	Egypt

clause:

Mr. Naggar, one of the most important journalists in Egypt, has come to the United States to meet some senior officials in HEW.

ʔinna	ʔal- sayyid	naggār	wa-	huwa	min	ʔahamm
(verily)	the mister	Naggar	and	he	from	more important

ʔal- ṣuḥufiyyīn	ʔal- miṣriyyīn	qad	haḍura	ʔilā
the journalists	the Egyptian		he came	to

ʔal- wilāyāt	ʔal- muttaḥida	liyuqābil	baʕḍ
the states	the united	in order that he meet	some

kibār	ʔal- muwaḍḍafīn	fī wizārat	ʔal- ṣiḥḥa	wa-
big (plural)	the officials	in ministry	the health	and

ʔal- tarbiya	wa-	ʔal- tarfīh	ʔal- ʔijtimāʕī
the education	and	the welfare	the social

3.1. English has two basic question types.

1) Wh-questions (content questions)

2) Yes-no questions (agreement questions)

Wh-questions are signaled by an initial question-word, where, who, how, etc. Yes-no questions are those which elicit a yes or no answer. They are signaled by certain combinations of word order and intonation patterns:

1) Reverse word order plus falling tone requesting information:

Is he a teacher? Does he teach?

2) Reverse word order plus marked rising tone expressing incredulity or politeness:

Is he a teacher? Does he teach?

3) Normal statement word order plus final rising tone, denoting incredulity or emotional involvement:

He went to the store?
He lived in New York?

These constructions can be used with negatives.

1) Requesting information:

Isn't he a teacher?

2) Expressing incredulity or politeness:

Wouldn't you like another cup of tea?

3) Expressing incredulity or emotional involvement:

He didn't go to the store?

3.2. All Arabic questions are signaled by a question word, with statement word-order and rising intonation. Yes-no questions are signaled by the question word /hal/, which has no translation equivalent in English:

Is he a teacher?			Does the boy eat?			
hal	huwa	mudarris	hal	ya?kul	?al-	walad
question word	he	teacher	question word	eat	the	boy

Occasionally a yes-no answer can be elicited by a question using normal statement word order plus rising intonation.

3.3.1. English yes-no questions can be answered using a simple

yes or no:

Is he a teacher?
Yes.

The questions can be answered in Arabic by using a simple yes or no, as in English:

He went to the store?
ðahab | ?ilā | ?al- matjar
he went | to | the store

naʃam
yes

3.3.2. English yes-no questions also can be answered using yes or no plus deletion of much of the verb phrase:

Is he a teacher?
Yes, he is.

Does he teach?
Yes, he does.

The questions can be answered in Arabic by using the equivalent of yes or no plus repetition of the subject and verb. Since Arabic has no auxiliaries, there can be no verb deletion:

Yes, he did.	No, he didn't.
naʃam | ðahab	lā, | lam | yaðhab
yes, | he went	no, | not | he went

3.3.3. English yes-no questions can be answered by expounding the underlying auxiliary:

Did he go to the store? or
He went to the store?
Yes, he did.

The questions can be answered in Arabic by yes or no, plus repetition of the whole sentence:

No, George doesn't study.
lā, \| George \| lā \| yuðākir
no, \| George \| not \| he studies

Since Arabic does not use a verbal auxiliary system, answers which expound the underlying auxiliary are likely to be difficult for the Arabic speaker:

Yes, he did.
No, he didn't.

3.4. English uses two negative forms in questions:
1) no, which stands alone syntactically as a response.
2) not, which functions as part of the verbal auxiliary system.
Arabic uses one form /lā/, meaning no. When this form stands alone in response, it is the translation equivalent of no, used in the same fashion. Within the sentence, the particle /lā/ simply negates an otherwise affirmative statement. English uses a separate form /not/ which functions as a verbal auxiliary, negating the verb. The use of two different particles, negating sentences, causes difficulty for the Arabic speaker.

In responding to negative questions English speakers ignore not in formulating an answer:

Isn't George a student?
Yes, he is.

Is George a student?
Yes, he is.

In either case the answer is the same because the questions (excluding the morpheme not) are the same. Such questions cause no particular difficulty for the Arabic student.

3.5. Tag questions are normally used when the speaker is checking the accuracy of his information. They are tacked onto the end of a statement. In English, such a construction can use only one negative. Thus, an affirmative statement uses a negative tag:

He's going to New York, isn't he?

A negative statement uses an affirmative tag:

He isn't going to New York, is he?

A tag question with no negative expresses surprise or hostility. Compare:

He's going to New York, isn't he?
He's going to New York, is he?

Arabic tag questions use a fixed form whether the preceding statement is negative or affirmative:

Isn't it so?

?a-	laysa	kaðālik
question word	it is not	thus

Arabic speakers have much difficulty in interpreting and properly answering tag questions. This is because English combines two elements in the tag which are foreign to Arabic grammar.

1) Where Arabic uses a set phrase, English uses a repetition of the auxiliary or modal:

He's going, isn't he?
He'll go, won't he?
He wants it, doesn't he?

2) The negative always occurs in the Arabic tag. In English, the tag is negative only if the statement is affirmative. Because of this the Arab will often have to have the question repeated twice or more. Even then he may answer yes when he means no, and vice-versa.

3.6. Aphorism

The verbless aphorism is a balanced compound sentence. The two clauses are understood to follow when and then:

(When) Nothing ventured, (then) nothing gained.
The more, the merrier.
Out of sight, out of mind.

The deletion of the verb, an unusual practice in English, is a grammatical device which does not translate directly into Arabic. The Arabic equivalents use grammatically whole clauses and, in the case of the equational sentence, a verbless construction which is quite normal, not distinctive, in Arabic.

3.7. Be + Predicate

Three kinds of sentences with be are common in English:

1) Be + NP (noun phrase)

He is the judge.
huwa | ʔal- qāḍi
he | the judge

2) Be + Adjective

The teacher is busy.
ʔal- mudarris | maʃɣūl
the teacher | busy

3) Be + Adverb

Your mother is here.
wālidatuk | hunā
your mother | here

English sentences using the verb to be in the present tense are translated into Arabic as equational sentences, which consist of a subject and a predicate, with no linking verb. The verb to be is not used in the present tense in Arabic; consequently, its occurrences and inflections in English (am, is, are) constitute

a problem for Arabic speakers. The non-present tense and modal form (was, will be, etc.) have Arabic equivalents and do not constitute major problems for Arabic speakers.

3.8 Intransitive Verbs

Intransitive verbs cause no difficulty. They function essentially in the same manner in both languages:

The ship sails tomorrow.

ʔal- bāxira	tabḥur	ɣadan
the ship	sails	tomorrow

3.9. Two-word Transitive Verbs

take in
put on

Both English and Arabic use two-word verbs, that is, verbs followed by a preposition, both parts of which function as a semantic unit; but the Arabic speaker experiences both grammatical and lexical difficulties in learning English usage.

1) In English, if the object is a pronoun, it must precede the preposition:

George took it in.

If the object is a noun, it may either precede or follow the preposition:

George took in the money.
George took the money in.

The Arabic object must always follow the preposition. That is, the Arabic two-word verbs are not separable:

He rooted out the enemy.

qaḍā	ʕalā	ʔal- ʕaduww
he decreed	on	the enemy

The difficulty associated with two-word verbs arises whenever an Arabic speaker uses a separable two-word verb followed by a pronoun object:

*He took in it.

3.10. Objects

Arabic and English use indirect objects in essentially the same fashion:

We gave the student a loan.

ʔaʕṭaynā	ʔal- ṭālib	sulfa
we gave	the student	loan

He sent me the money.
baʃaθ | lī | ʔal- nuqūd
he sent | to me | the money

We gave a loan to the student.
ʔaʃṭaynā | sulfa | li | ʔal- ṭālib
we gave | loan | to | the student

He sent the money to me.
al | nuqūd | baʃaθhā | lī
the | money | he sent it | to me

Both languages delete the preposition to or for when the indirect object immediately follows the verb. They retain it otherwise. If the English direct object is a personal pronoun, to/for is required in the prepositional phrase, and the indirect object phrase must follow the direct object. This is also the case in Arabic:

He sent it to me.
baʃaθhā lī
he sent it to me

He ordered it for him.
ṭalabhā | lahu
he ordered it | to him

3.11. Infinitive Objective Complement

I begged him to stay.
We ordered them to leave.

This English construction uses a verb plus object, plus a complementary infinitive. Arabic has two corresponding constructions:

1) Verb + object + nominalized clause:

I begged him to stay.
rajawtuhu | ʔan | yabqā
I begged him | that | he stay

2) Verb + object + preposition + verbal noun:

We ordered the boys to leave.
ʔamarnā | ʔal- ʔawlād | bi | ʔal- ðahāb
we ordered | the boys | with | the to go

Two problems arise for the Arabic speaker learning English.

1) Difficulty in remembering to insert to in the complement construction:

*I begged him stay.

2) Possibility of mistaken preposition insertion. This occurs only when the Arabic preposition is close or equivalent in meaning to the English:

I'm pleased to meet you.
saʕīd | bimuqābalatik
happy | with to meet you

An Arabic speaker is likely to say in English:

*I'm happy with meeting you.

3.12. Infinitive as object

English uses an infinitive as direct object following verbs of attitude: intend, demand, plead, wish, hope, like, expect, try, love, etc. Here Arabic uses a verbal noun or nominalized clause:

He intends to study.
yanwī | ʔan | yadrus
he intends | that | he study

As usual, the use of to with the infinitive is difficult for an Arabic speaker.

3.13. Gerundive Objective Complement

I got the motor running.
I watched a ship sailing.
We saw him crying.

The English construction uses a verb plus an object plus a gerund in complement to the object. Arabic uses a similar construction when the verb is one of duration over time or space (like travel, see, hear, etc.). The verb is followed by an object plus either an active participle:

šāhadnāh | bākiyan
we saw him | crying

or a present indicative verb agreeing with the object:

šāhadnāh | yabkī
we saw him | he cries

When the English verb is also one of duration, the English complement construction causes no problems for Arabic speakers. However, there are tangential cases where problems arise:

1) He saw the boy drown.
I heard the boy yell.

In English, this construction is verb plus object plus nominal-

ized infinitive complement without to. It has the meaning of ongoing action in the past which has been completed. Since complements giving the idea of completed action are not used with Arabic verbs of duration, the Arabic speaker is likely to use the gerund rather than the infinitive form in all cases:

He saw the boy drowning.
I heard the boy yelling.

2) When the verb is not one of duration:

I got the motor running.

Arabic uses a nominalized verb rather than a participle in complement:

bada?t	?idārat	?al- muḥarrik
I started	the running	the motor

3) A number of gerund constructions like "motor running" and "wheel turning" are not used in Arabic and, thus, constitute problems in both interpretation and reproduction for Arabic speakers.

3.14. Nominalized Verb Complement Without to

We watched him drown.
I had him stay.
That joke makes people laugh.
Please let me know.

The English construction is verb plus object plus nominalized verb in complement. Arabic has a similar construction, with the difference that an inflected rather than a nominalized verb is used:

That joke makes people laugh.

tilka	?al- duʕāba	tajʕal	?al- nās	yadḥakūn
that	the joke	it makes	the people	they laugh

In addition, Arabic has causative verbs which contain the idea of making someone do something. Constructions using these verbs are equivalent to the English nominalized verb complement construction when the idea of causality is involved:

tilka	?al- duʕāba	tudḥik	?al- nās
that	the joke	it causes to laugh	the people

3.15. Nominal Objective Complement

English uses a noun in complement to the direct object. The complement must follow the object. The Arabic construction is identical:

The voters elected him governor.

ʔal- nāxibūn	intaxabūh	muḥāfiẓ
the voters	elected him	governor

3.16. Adjective Infinitive Complement

We believe him to be honest.
They considered him to be crazy.

The Arabic speaker would be inclined not to produce the infinitive to be because it is lacking in the equivalent Arabic construction. The verb to believe is one of several in Arabic which take two accusatives, without a linking verb:

We believe him to be nice:
We believe him nice.

naʕtaqiduhu	laṭīf
we believe him	nice

3.17. Linking verbs like appear, feel, act, sound

My room seems cold.
My shoes look old.

The linking verb followed by a predicate adjective presents a number of problems for Arabic speakers. This is a case where two different features of Arabic coalesce, causing difficulty in using an English form.

1) Arabic does not use adverbs as we know them. There is a small group of words: here, there, only, etc. which are, strictly speaking, adverbs. In all other cases, the same form may be used for modifying both nouns and verbs. Arabic shows no distinction between adjectives and adverbs:

The man walked happily.

sār	ʔal- rajul	saʕīdan
walked	the man	happy

The happy man talked.

ʔal- rajul	ʔal- saʕid	takallam
the man	the happy	talked

This causes some confusion when the student is learning to use proper adverbial forms. Mistakes such as

*He talked happy.

are likely to be made.

2) English linking verbs are those, other than the verb to be, which can be followed by predicate adjectives, rather than adverbs. This characteristic marks them as a separate class. The Arabic student who has difficulty mastering the proper use of

adjectives and adverbs also has difficulty learning a set of verbs whose proper usage depends on this mastery.

3) Several of these verbs have V_1 and V_2 forms, V_1 being an intransitive linking verb meaning appeared, seemed, followed by a predicate adjective:

He looked good yesterday.

and V_2 being a transitive verb meaning gazed at, saw, modified by an adverb:

He looked well at the picture.

A number of the linking verbs have V_1 and V_2 forms, whereas Arabic uses separate verbs:

He looked good yesterday.

badā	biṣūra	jayyida	bial?ams
looked	with appearance	good	yesterday

He looked well at the picture.

naẓar	jayyidan	fī	?al- ṣūra
he looked	good	in	the picture

Since Arabic can use the same form jayyid "good", an adjective, for modification in both cases, the Arabic student typically makes such mistakes in English as:

*He looked good at the picture.

4) A number of the linking verbs: taste, feel, sound, smell..., refer to the senses:

It tastes delicious.
It smelled good.

Here Arabic uses a noun modified by an adjective:

The taste is delicious.

?al- ṭaʕm	laðīð
the taste	delicious

The smell was good.

?al- rā?iha	kānat	jamīla
the smell	was	good

From this are derived such statements as:

"The taste is delicious," instead of "It tastes delicious."
"The smell was good," instead of "It smelled good."

which are intelligible, but not usual, in English.

3.18. Adjective Complements

An English adjective follows an object noun or pronoun when used as a complement. Arabic uses the same form for the adjective complement:

He built	his house	small.
banā	manzilahu	ṣaɣīr
he built	his house	small

In many cases, however, where English uses an adjective complement, Arabic requires some other construction, such as an instrumental phrase:

We painted	our house	with	the color	the yellow
ṭalayna	manzilanā	bi	?al- lawn	?al-?aṣfar
we painted	our house	with	the color	the yellow

Arabic does not allow the use of color words in complement constructions. An Arabic speaker may have some difficulty in remembering to do so in English, prefering instead a rough translation from Arabic:

*We painted our house with the yellow color.

3.19. Adverbial complements

Both English and Arabic use adverbs as complements. Word-order is the same in both languages:

The teacher	wants	the students	here
al mundarris	yurīd	al ṭalaba	hunā
the teacher	wants	the students	here

3.20. VP + for + Complement of Obligation

The professor said for us to do it.
It is safe for us to go home.

This construction does not occur in Arabic, which uses instead a nominalized clause, that plus a verb in the subjunctive mood, in lieu of an infinitive phrase:

He said	to us	that	we go
qāl	lanā	?an	naðhab
he said	to us	that	we go

An Arabic speaker is likely to use a rough translation from Arabic:

*He said $\begin{Bmatrix} \text{to} \\ \text{for} \end{Bmatrix}$ us that we go.

and will have some difficulty in learning the proper English.

3.21. There + Indefinite NP

There was a cat in my hat.
There will be a party tomorrow.

English indicates the existence of something by using the word there, a form of be, and usually an indefinite NP:

There is a ghost in your room.

Arabic has three ways of expressing this, none of which includes the verb kān, "be":

a)	hunāk	ʃabaḥ	fī	ʁurfatik
	there	ghost	in	your room

b)	fī	ʁurfatik	ʃabaḥ
	in	your room	ghost

c)	yūjad	ʃabaḥ	fī	ʁurfatik
	he is found	ghost	in	your room

The first example is exactly parallel to the English, except that there is no copula be. The use of the copula in English constitutes a problem for Arabic speakers. Any of these constructions can be made past by prefixing the proper form of kān, "he was". When the first example is made past, /hunāk/ there, is usually dropped:

kān	ʃabaḥ	fī	ʁurfatik
he was	ghost	in	your room

Of the three, (c) is usually preferred in the past:

kān	yūjad	ʃabaḥ	fī	ʁurfatik
he was	he is found	ghost	in	your room

Likewise for the future, /sayakūn/ he will be may be prefixed to (a), (b), or (c):

sayakūn	fī	ʁurfatik	ʃabaḥ
will be	in	your room	ghost

The Arab is likely to omit be in its inflected forms in the present tense:

*There the ghost in your room.

and to offer a rough translation from Arabic for the past and future tenses:

*He was found the ghost in your room.

77

3.22. It Inversion

A sentence having an abstract nominalized subject can have its word order reversed so that it begins with It:

That we won the game is surprising. ⟹
It is surprising that we won the game.

In this capacity as an expletive, it makes it possible to maintain the topic or theme-before-verb word order preferred in English, while inverting the clause subject to final position.

It is normal in Arabic to invert the clause subject of an equational sentence, without, however, using any expletive:

It is necessary that we travel.

min	?al-wājib	?an	nusāfir
from	the necessary	that	we travel

The Arabic speaker will say in English:

*Surprise that we travel.

or

*From the surprise that we travel.

If the English verb phrase is an it-inversion, the Arabic equivalent may be either a nominalized clause, as above, or a verbal noun:

It is safe for us to go home.

		?an	naðhab	?ilā	?al-manzil
		that	we go	to	the residence
ma?mūn	lanā				
safe	for us				
		?al-	ðahāb	?ilā	?al-manzil
		the	to go	to	the residence

Here again, the Arabic speaker may use a translation equivalent:

*It is safe for us that we go to the home.

He may also have difficulties with it.

3.23. It Statements

English uses the impersonal it to introduce these statements:

It's five o'clock.
It's raining.
It's autumn.

Arabic has no neuter gender. Since it uses only masculine and feminine genders, the masculine pronoun /huwa/ he or the feminine pronoun /hiya/ she, depending on the gender of the object refer-

red to, are found in equivalent statements:

It (the door) is open.
huwa | maftūḥ
he | open

It (the table) is broken.
hiya | maksūra
she | broken

The English impersonal it has no counterpart in Arabic. Arabic speakers will find its usage unfamiliar, confusing, and difficult. There are several other Arabic constructions which correspond to English It-statements:

It's five o'clock.
ʔinnahā | ʔal-sāʕa | ʔal-xāmisa
indeed she | the hour | the fifth

It's time to go.
ḥān | ʔal-waqt | li | ʔal-ðahāb
has come | the time | to | the to go

It's necessary to go.
ḍaruriyy | ʔan | naðhab
necessary | that | we go

or:

ʔal-ðahāb | ḍaruriyy
the to go | necessary

In some cases, Arabic uses two different constructions to convey meanings which can be expressed by one construction in English:

It's autumn. { It's autumn (not winter).
{ It's autumn (now).

It's autumn (not winter).
huwa | ʔal-xarīf
he | the autumn

It's autumn (autumn has come).
jāʔ | ʔal-xarīf
came | the autumn

3.24. There Inversion:

In English, normal clause word order is subject before verb. In a positive declarative sentence the verb occupies second position. If for some reason the subject and verb are inverted, the expletive there or it is inserted to keep the verb in second position. Otherwise it would become an interrogative sentence.

Several plans were being considered. ⇒

There were several plans being considered. or
There were being considered several plans.

These particular word order constraints do not exist in Arabic. A speaker can place either subject or verb first, as he wishes:

durisat	ʕiddat	xiṭaṭ
was studied	number of	plans

$\Rightarrow$

ʕiddat	xiṭaṭ	durisat
number of	plans	was studied

Arabic does not use expletives, such as there or it.

3.25. Noun Replacement: That + Sentence

Both English and Arabic use (that + Sentence) as subject:

That I am failing this course disturbs me.
That he wants to succeed is understandable.

The above word order is mandatory in English. While this order is possible in Arabic, the reverse (VP + that + S) is preferred:

That he wants to succeed is understandable.

mafhūm	ʔannahu	yurīd	ʔal-najāḥ
understandable	that he	wants	the success

Arabic-speaking students may resist learning that + S-sentences.

3.26. That + S as Object

When used as an object, (that + Sentence) functions in the same manner in both languages:

I think that he made a mistake:

ʔaʕtaqid	ʔannahu	ʔaxṭaʔ
(I) think	that he	made a mistake

3.27. Wh-word + Sentence

Both languages use wh-word + Sentence as subject and object.

When he went to bed is the problem.
I know what he wants.

As subject and object, the clause functions in a similar manner in both languages. However, within the clause there are some differences which may cause problems:

1) Where English has one form what for both relative and interrogative usages, Arabic has two:

what = /mā/ - relative, that which
/māðā/ - interrogative, what?

2) In English, reverse word order signals a question:

How is he getting along?

and statement word order signals relative clause usage:

How he gets along amazes me.

Arabic uses the same word order in both cases:

How is he getting along?

kayfa	yasluk	fī	ʔal-hayāh
how	he finds his way	in	the life

How he gets along amazes me.

kayfa	yasluk	fī	ʔal-hayāh	yuðhilunī
how	he finds his way	in	the life	he amazes me

The Arabic speaker will tend to use the same word order in both cases, preferring that which he uses for direct questions:

*How does he get along amazes me.

3.28. Wh-word + infinitive as subject

English uses a wh-word + infinitive as subject:

What to say is hard to decide.
Where to go is always a problem.

Arabic does not use the infinitive in this manner. A comparable construction uses an impersonal you, we, or they, plus indicative verb declined in the present:

What to say is hard to decide.

māðā	taqūl	ṣaʕb	taqrīruhu
what	you say	difficult	decide it

Where to go is always a problem.

ʔayna	taðhab	dāʔiman	muʃkila
where	you go	always	problem

The Arabic speaker will often use a rough translation from Arabic:

How you decide is simple.

3.29. Wh-word + Infinitive as object

Wh-words plus infinitives can be used as direct objects in English:

I know what to say.
I know where to go.
I know when to sleep.

Subjects and inflected verbs can also be used with wh-words to

form direct objects:

I know what I'll say.

These constructions are often semantic equivalents. Arabic is more restricted than English in using this construction. An inflected verb agreeing with the subject is required:

I know	what	to say.
ʔaʕlam	māðā	ʔaqūl
I know	what	I say

However, the Arabic student appears to have relatively little difficulty learning to use the infinitive form in English.

3.30. Infinitive as Subject

3.30.1. The infinitive can be used as a subject in English:

To appear on TV is excruciating.
To err is human.
To believe is difficult.

Arabic has two constructions which can be used as translation equivalents of the infinitive subject.

1) A construction which uses a nominalized clause, introduced by the conjunction /ʔan/ that and having the verb in the subjunctive, as subject:

To err is human.

ʔan	tuxṭiʔ	fahāðā	ṭabiʕiyy
that	you would err	this	natural

The term /ʔinsānīyy/ human cannot be used in this sense in Arabic. Rather, the term /ṭabiʕiyy/ natural, normal is used.

The /ʔan/ clause requires some type of a determiner such as /fahāðā/ this in the main body of the sentence. Thus:

To appear on TV is excruciating.

becomes

ʔan	taẓhar	fī	ʔal-telifizyūn	faʃayʔ	mūjiʕ
that	you would appear	on	the TV	something	excruciating

Possible mistakes in English might be:

To err this is human.
To err is something human.

3.30.2. An Arabic verbal noun used as subject:

To believe is difficult.

ʔal-iʕtiqād	ṣaʕb	
the to believe	difficult	

The verbal noun of Arabic is used in many positions where English uses an infinitive. Consequently, it may be more fruitful for the Arabic student to keep this construction in mind when learning the English infinitive subject. He may still be tempted to produce the gerund construction:

Believing is difficult.

rather than the infinitive, as in other situations. However, the verbal noun remains a simpler reference point than the /ʔan/ clause.

3.31. Infinitive of Purpose

This exercise is designed to help you.
It was made to keep the water out.

The infinitive of purpose, like the infinitive used as subject, has two Arabic translation equivalents--the verbal noun and the subjunctive verb. In both cases the verbal forms are preceded by the preposition /li/, to or for:

It was made to keep the water out.

ṣuniʕat		limanʕ		ʔal-miyāh	
was manufactured		for stopping of		the water	

So, the Arabic speaker will prefer to use the -ing form.

3.32. Gerund Nominal

The gerund nominal of purpose functions in the same manner in both languages:

I have a knack for getting into trouble.

ʕindī	mawhiba	fī	ʔal-wuqūʕ	fi	ʔal-maʃākil	
I have	knack	in	the falling	in	the trouble	

They imprisoned him for breaking into a house.

sajanūh	li	iqtihāmih	manzil	
they imprisoned him	for	breaking into	a house	

English requires the preposition for at all times. In Arabic the choice of preposition may vary depending on the verb. So the Arabic speaker may say something like:

*They imprisoned him in breaking into a house.

3.33. Abstract Nouns

The abstract nominal is equivalent in both languages:

Her beauty surpassed all limits.

jamāluha	fāq	kull	ʔal-ḥudūd
her beauty	surpassed	all	the limits

So, Arabic speakers have little difficulty with abstract nouns, except for the derived forms, such as those in -ness, -ity, -tion, etc., which must be memorized.

3.34. Adjective + Infinitive

Adjective + infinitive can be used as a verbal complement in English:

He is free to go.
It is always hard to decide.
I'm happy to meet you.

Arabic does not use an infinitive in this manner. There are several comparable constructions, using a verbal noun, an /ʔan/ clause (see 3.30.), or an adjective idāfa.

The adjective idāfa is an adjective with a following modifying noun, like the English "fleet of foot" or "strong of limb":

It's always hard to decide.

hāʔā	dāʔiman	ṣaʕb	ʔal- taqrīr	fīh
this	always	difficult	the to decide	in it

This construction, like the /ʔan/ clause, requires some kind of a specific reference, in this case a prepositional object of some kind. A possible mistake in English is a literal translation from Arabic. Thus:

He is free to go.

becomes

*He is free of going.

3.35. Adjective + That

The Adjective + that clause sentence is a common one:

I'm happy that you have come.

This construction is the same in both languages:

ʔana	saʕīd	ʔannaka	jiʔt
I	happy	that you	you came

But be may be omitted by the Arabic student.

3.36. Adjective + Gerundive

Worms are good for catching fish.

This construction is the same in Arabic and in English:

ʔal-dīdān	jayyida	li	ṣayd	ʔal-samak
the worms	good	for	catching	the fish

Note that the equivalent of be is omitted in Arabic.

3.37. Adverbial Clause

The construction using an adverbial clause

You may go whenever you wish.
You may go wherever you wish.
You may go however you wish.

is the same in both languages:

You may go whenever you wish

yumkinuk	ʔan	taʾhab	waqtamā	taʃāʔ
you may	that	you go	whenever	you wish

Note /ʔan/ that (see 3.30.). The Arabic speaker may include the to of the infinitive:

*You may to go whenever you wish.

3.38. Connectives

The compound sentence is a structure in which the units are two or more simple sentences joined together either by juncture alone, or by juncture plus a connective:

John hit me; I didn't hit him.

John hit me, but I didn't hit him.

English uses three types of connective to form compound sentences. In the first group are the simple connectives: and, or, but, either...or, not only...but also, the contrasting connective yet and the connective of consequence so. Sentences using these connectives usually have a level juncture, which alerts the hearer that more is to follow immediately:

My sister likes him, but I don't.

In the second group are the connective adverbs. These serve both as sentence-linkers (connectives) and as sentence modifiers (adverbs). The most important are:

besides	moreover	furthermore	however
still	nevertheless	otherwise	consequently
therefore	thus	hence	accordingly
instead	anyway		

There is usually a falling juncture (↓) before the connective and a level juncture (→) after it:

It's too rainy to go out tonight. (↓)
(→)
Besides, I have work to do.

In the third group are certain prepositional phrases that pattern like the connective adverbs. These include:

in addition	as a result
on the other hand	for instance
in the first place	in fact
for that reason	for example
as a consequence	as a matter of fact

As in English, Arabic connectives are divided into types. Simple connectives are, like those in English, preceded by level juncture:

1) wa 'and', which connects both words and clauses.
2) fa, a particle of classification or graduation. It can connect words, but usually occurs between clauses, showing that the second is immediately subsequent to the first in time, or that it is connected with it by some internal link, such as that of cause and effect. It may be translated as: and so, thereupon, and consequently, and for (although in this last sense another term fa?inn is more commonly used).
3) ?am or ?aw 'or'
4) ?ammā...fa 'as for', 'as regards'
5) ?an 'that'
ka?anna 'as it were'
li?anna 'that', 'in order that', 'because'
6) θumma 'then', 'thereupon', 'next'. This term implies succession at an interval.
7) lākin 'but'. Lākin is a particle, which can function as a conjunction or a connective.
8) ?immā...?an 'either...or'
9) laysa faqaṭ...bal ?aydan 'not only...but also'

Arabic also has connective adverbs. These are somewhat similar to the English prepositional phrases, such as in addition to, in the first place, etc. They consist of a noun, a preposition plus a noun, a preposition plus a noun plus a preposition, etc., as do many English prepositional phrases. In Arabic there are no adverbs, such as the English besides, functioning as conjunctions. The Arabic speaker does not have much of a problem in memorizing English prepositions. The difficulty lies in learning when to use which.

PART 4: SYNTAX: VERB PHRASE

4.0. Introduction

Verb phrases (VP) may consist of:

1) (V) Verb:

The officer arrived yesterday.

waṣal	ʔal- ḍābiṭ	ʔams
arrived	the officer	yesterday

He hung the pictures on the wall.

ʕallaq	ʔal- ṣuwar	ʕalā	ʔal- ḥaʔiṭ
he hung	the pictures	on	the wall

2) (V-prep) Verb plus a preposition; the preposition must always be followed by an object:

He commented on the pictures.

ʕallaq	ʕalā	ʔal- ṣuwar
he commented	on	the pictures

If the verb is passive, the goal of the action must be the object of the preposition:

The pictures were commented upon.

ʕulliq	ʕalā	ʔal- ṣuwar
it was hung	on	the pictures

3) (V-V^{imp}) The second verb is imperfect, and the first may be either perfect or imperfect. The first verb is a verb of beginning or continuing (to do something):

He began to study. (He began studying.)

bada?	yadrus
he began	he studies

He continued to study. (He kept on studying.)

ḍall	yadrus
he remained	he studies

He is still studying.

lam	yazal	yadrus
did not	he ceases	he studies

Certain other verbs assume this meaning of beginning when they participate in this construction:

He began to study.			He began to study.		
ʔaṣbaḥ	yadrus		ʔaxaḏ	yadrus	
he became	he studies		he took	he studies	

Compare English <u>get going</u>, <u>take to drinking</u>, <u>fall to talking to himself</u>, etc.

4) (kān + V) This verb phrase consists of a verb preceded by the equivalent of the English verb to be: /kān/ he was, /sayakūn/ he will be (conventionally referred to as "the verb kān"). The function of /kān/ is to show relative time: /kān/ denotes earlierness ("before now") while /sayakūn/ makes a prediction of subsequent events or states. To illustrate this with a participle:

He is going.		He was going.		He will be going.	
huwa	ðāhib	kān	ðāhib	sayakūn	ðāhib
he	going	he was	going	he will be	going

The verb /yadrus/ may have habitual meaning, as he studies (every day), or progressive meaning, he is studying. With /kān/ these become:

	Habitual	Progressive
Present /yadrus/	he studies	he is studying
Past /kān yadrus/	he [always] studied	he was studying
	he used to study	
	he would [always] study	

The combination */sayakūn yadrus/ does not occur, being replaced by /sayadrus/ he will study, he will be studying.

If /kān/ is followed by a perfect tense verb, the particle /qad/ is automatically added before the second verb; the subject, if expressed by a noun phrase, follows after /kān/:

kān (S) qad V^{perf} ...

for example:

The officer had left when I got there.

kān	ʔal- ḍābiṭ	qad	sāfar	hīnamā	waṣaltu
he was	the officer		he left	when	I arrived

If /kān/ is perfect, as above, the meaning of the verbal phrase is past perfect; if /sayakūn/ is used, the meaning is future perfect:

The officer will have left by the time you get here.

sayakūn	ʔal- ḍābiṭ	qad	sāfar	ʕinda	wuṣūlika
he will be	the officer		he left	at the time of	your arrival

4.1. English verbs must agree with the subject in number and person:

Singular

(I) am, was, play
(you) are, were, play
(he, she, it) is, was, plays

Plural

(we) are, were, play
(you) are, were, play
(they) are, were, play

This is also true of Arabic. However, Arabic is far more detailed than English in its forms for number and person:

ʔana ʔaktub	I write
ʔanta taktub	you write (m.)
ʔanti taktubīn	you write (f.)
ʔantumā taktubān	you write (dual)
huwa yaktub	he writes
hiya taktub	she writes
humā yaktubān	they write (dual)
naḥn naktubu	we write
ʔantum taktubūn	you write (m. pl.)
ʔantunna taktubna	you write (f. pl.
hum yaktubūn	they write (m. pl.)
hunna yaktubna	they write (f. pl.)

Although Arabic is more detailed than English in its inflections for number and person, it is also very regular. Arabic speakers have difficulty learning the many irregular English forms, and their appropriate usage.

4.2. Past tense forms fall into several classes:

talk - talked
bring - brought
bend - bent
put - put
go - went

The unpredictability of past tense inflection is a major problem for Arabic speakers.

4.3 Arabic is inflected for all persons in all tenses. English is inflected only in the third person singular, present tense. This is extremely confusing to Arabs, who expect either total inflection or none at all. The general tendency is to omit the {-s} inflection entirely:

*He play often.

4.4. Third person singular present tense inflection is highly irregular in English:

have - has
do - does

But, verbs ending in /s, z, ʃ, ʒ, tʃ, and dʒ/ add /-Iz/; verbs ending in /p, t, k, θ, and f/ add /-s/; verbs ending otherwise add /-z/. Learning both the irregular forms and the proper usage of suffixation is an extremely difficult problem for Arabic speakers.

4.5. Verb phrase behavior in affirmative statements contrasts with behavior in interrogative questions.

English statement word order requires that the verb phrase follow the noun phrase subject:

He is eating.

For questions, the auxiliary or modal is inverted to initial position preceding the subject:

Is he eating?

If there is no modal, a dummy DO is inserted:

Does he write?

If there is more than one modal, only the first is inverted to initial position:

Could he have done it?

In Arabic, a question is formed simply by inserting the interrogative particle /hal/ or the question prefix /?a-/ in initial position:

Does he write?

hal	(huwa)	yaktub
question word	(he)	writes

Inversion is never used, and modals do not exist in Arabic. Consequently, word order and the use of auxiliaries and modals, in both affirmative and interrogative verb phrases, constitute major problems for Arabic speakers learning English.

4.6. Positive and negative verb phrases require no structural changes. In English, negation is restricted to the word or phrase it is a part of:

He's writing.
He isn't writing.

The same rule applies in Arabic:

He's writing.			He isn't writing.		
huwa	yaktub		huwa	lā	yaktub
he	writes		he	not	writes

Thus, this particular feature of English negatives causes no problems for Arabic speakers.

4.7. When the negative particle not occurs after the first word of the verb phrase, it negates the occurence of the verbal event. Compare:

He couldn't have been doing that.
He couldn't not have been doing that.

If the verb does not have an auxiliary or modal:

He saw that.

a dummy DO is inserted before the negative particle and the verb is put into the present tense form:

He did not see that.

Not functions as a lexical negator when it occurs anywhere else in the sentence. In this case, it negates only that word which it immediately precedes:

He could have not been doing that.
He could have been not doing that.
He could have been doing not that but something else.

Arabic also distinguishes between verb negation and lexical negation. However, there are several major differences between English and Arabic in this matter, which lead to serious problems for the student learning English:

When the negative particle /lā/ is functioning as a verbal negative, affecting the action of the verb phrase, it immediately precedes the verb. This causes no problems when the student is learning imperfect past tense constructions:

He was not writing.		
kān	lā	yaktub
he was not		he write

In this instance, both languages use the same construction. However, in all other cases, there are major differences, stemming from the English auxiliary system, which is extremely confusing to the Arabic speaker learning English.

Imperfect and progressive present tense constructions:

He does not write.
He is not writing.

are rendered in Arabic as:

huwa	lā	yaktub
he	not	he writes

The student will have difficulty with both the differences in meaning of these constructions, and with proper placement of the negative.

4.8. In many cases where English uses a verb plus auxiliaries and modals, Arabic uses a verb plus /ʔan/ clause:

He couldn't not have been doing that.

lā	yumkin	ʔannahu	kān	lā	yafʕal	ðālik
not	is possible	that he	was	not	he does	that

He couldn't have been doing that.

lā	yumkin	ʔannahu	kān	yafʕal	ðālik
not	is possible	that he	was	he does	that

He could have not been doing that.

mumkin	ʔannahu	kān	lā	yafʕal	ðālik
possible	that he	was	not	he does	that

He could have been not doing that.

mumkin	ʔannahu	kān	lā	yafʕal	ðālik
possible	that he	was	not	he does	that

The above examples illustrate the variety of positions in which the English negative can occur. In all cases, the Arabic counterpart immediately precedes the verb. English usage will seem extremely random and complex to the Arabic-speaking student.

4.9. In English, the lack of inflection {-s} with the common tense shows subjunctive when the verb is in the third person singular:

That he become president is my one desire.

compare:

I insist that he live here. (I order him...)
I insist that he lives here. (I know that...)

Arabic uses the subjunctive much more extensively than does English. Furthermore, Arabic and English constructions using the subjunctive are often grammatically equivalent:

I insist that he live here.

ʔana	ʔuṣirr	ʔan	yuqīm	hunā
I	insist	that he	live	here

However, there are difficulties in learning to use the subjunctive in English:

1) The proper use of inflection in the third person singular is confusing. The student will often forget to drop the {-s}.

2) Learning appropriate situations for using this construction is difficult for the Arabic speaker.

4.10. English common tense signals non-specific time; it implies that a statement is of general application, and holds good for all time, or that the action is habitual or recurrent:

You see, I've not forgotten to mail the letter.
I understand you work here now.
I hear you're a member now.

Normally, Arabic and English use present tense in similar circumstances. Such constructions as:

I sleep on the floor.
I work in a factory.

are equivalent:

I work in a factory.

ʔaʕmal	fī	maṣnaʕ
I work	in	factory

The above group of verbs, however, are not interpreted similarly in the two languages. Where English uses common tense to emphasize the result-condition aspect of a situation (I understand, I hear, I see), Arabic uses the past tense to emphasize the completed-action aspect. Thus:

I understand.

is in Arabic:

ʔanā	fahimt
I	understood (I have achieved an understanding of it.)

The Arabic speaker is quite likely to use the past tense in this construction:

I understood you work here now.

4.11. English common tense and Arabic present tense are equivalent in many situations:

1) In lending historical force to statements:

The Bible says many things.

ʔal-	ʔinjīl	yaqūl	ʔaʃyāʔ	kaθīra
the	Bible	says	things	many

2) To indicate that an event will take place, with an adverbial of time:

The movie starts at eight.

?al- sīnimā	tabda?	fī	?al- sāʕa	?al- θāmina
the movie	starts	in (at)	the hour	the eighth

In both languages, such statements can be made with both a general meaning (using common or present tense) or a specifically future meaning:

We will return next week.

narjaʕ	fī	?al- ?usbūʕ	?al- qādim
we (will) return	in	the week	the next

An Arabic speaker may have some difficulty deciding which situations call for a general statement and which call for something more specific, and will tend generally to use the future tense. However, this is not a major problem.

3) To indicate that an activity or capability exists at the time of speaking, has existed previous to this time, and will continue to exist afterwards:

He lives on Maple Street.

yuqīm	fī	ʃāriʕ	maple
(he) lives	in	street	Maple

4) To show states of mind which exist over a period of time:

I like Ike.

?uḥibb	ike
(I) like (or love)	Ike

5) To indicate customary action. Time is usually expressed with an adverb:

He often goes to the movies.

kaθīran rāḥ	yaðhab	?ilā	?al- sīnima
much	he goes	to	the movies

6) In the historic present for relating stories and giving directions:

Last summer I hear that there are jobs open in Idaho. I catch the first bus west and hope my money lasts long enough to get me there.

Michael enters from stage right, crosses the room and sits in the sink.

mixa?īl	yadxul	min	?al- jānib	?al- ?ayman	min	?al- masraḥ
Michael	enters	from	the side	the right	from	the stage

waya$\int$bur	?al-	ɣurfa	wa	yajlis	fī	?al-	balū$\int$a
and crosses	the	room	and	sits	in	the	sink

4.12. Past tense in English signals a completed act or series of acts. It often occurs with adverbials of time:

He went to the store.
He went yesterday.
He went just now.

The forms of the past tense are:

1) /-d/, /-t/, /-Id/ on weak verbs, e.g. play - played
2) Ablaut or vocalic change, e.g. bind - bound, bleed - bled
3) Mixed verbs with alveolar suffix, e.g. say - said, sell - sold
4) Devoicing verbs, e.g. build - built, lend - lent
5) Invariable verbs, e.g. beat, cut, put

Arabic distinguishes past tense from present by ablaut patterns:

/ktub/ writes → /katab/ wrote
/$\int$allim/ teaches → /$\int$allam/ taught

There are nine derived conjugation types, with semantic correlation for each type:

/daras/ he studied (Form I)
/darras/ he caused to study = he instructed (Form II)
/jama$\int$ū/ they gathered (things together) (Transitive, Form I)
/?ijtama$\int$ū/ they gathered together (Intransitive, Form VII, reflexive of Form I)

And so forth. For derived verbs see 4.43, pp. 105ff.

4.13. Past habitual constructions in English have used to plus the infinitive:

I used to go to the movies frequently.
George used to come home at five o'clock.
Alfonzo used to love Martha.

Past habitual is expressed in Arabic by the imperfect (present) tense plus the past time marker /kān/ was:

/yadrus/ (he) studies (habitual)
/kān yadrus/ (he) used to study (past habitual)

The problem is that the imperfect also has progressive and predictive meaning, depending on the context:

/yadrus/ (he) is going to study, is studying
/kān yadrus/ (he) was going to study, was studying

The Arabic speaker will have difficulty remembering that these meanings require different constructions in English. He may often use the progressive construction when he intends the predictive meaning, and vice versa.

4.14. English preterit forms are difficult for the Arabic-speaking student. The problem lies in learning to handle the many fine distinctions that English can achieve. The Arabic

/kān ya?kul/ he was eats

can be rendered in English as:

1) He ate: past habitual, e.g. He usually ate every time at home.
2) He was eating: past progressive
3) He used to eat: past habitual with implications of a past situation which no longer exists, e.g. He used to eat at home, but now he eats at the automat. Arabic speakers do not make this distinction.
5) He would eat: past habitual, e.g. He would eat on his way to work. Arabic speakers confuse this with the conditional would: I would buy a car if I had the money.

Arabic speakers are likely to have difficulty learning the appropriate occasions for use of each of these forms.

4.15. Modal auxiliaries inject a sort of evaluation of the action or situation into the verb phrase. They can be grouped roughly according to meaning into ten categories:

1) Ability:
   - can
   - could
   - be able
   - be unable
   - would be able
   - be going to be able
   - can't help trying
2) Permission:
   - may
   - can
   - could
   - get to
3) Necessity:
   - must
   - have to
   - had to
   - need to
4) Obligation:
   - should
   - ought to
   - be to
   - need to
   - should have
   - ought to have
   - had better
   - be supposed to
5) Possibility:
   - might
   - may
   - may have
   - might have
   - may be able to
   - might have to
   - may have to
   - be likely to
6) Preference:
   - prefer
   - would rather
   - would prefer

7) Desire:
would like
8) Deduction:
must be
must have
must be going to
9) Prediction:
be about to
shall
be going to
10) Intention:

will	be going to
would	intend to
plan to	expect to
hope to	promise to

4.16. The modals present a variety of problems to the Arabic student of English:

Modals as a grammatical class do not exist in Arabic. Their meanings are conveyed by particles, prepositional phrases, and unmodified verbs. Can can be rendered in Arabic as a prepositional phrase:

fi	istiṭāʕatī
in	my capacity

as in:

I can speak English.

fi	istiṭāʕatī	ʔan	ʔatakallam	ʔal- ʔinglīziyya
in	my capacity	that	I speak	the English

Can may also be expressed by the verb /yastaṭīʕ/ can, to be able:

ʔastaṭīʕ	ʔan	ʔatakallam	ʔal- ʔinglīziyya
I can	that	I speak	the English

In most cases, such a verb or prepositional phrase precedes a nominalized /ʔan/ clause:

I hope to go tomorrow.

ʔāmul	ʔan	ʔaðhab	ɣadan
I hope	that	I go	tomorrow

or a verbal noun:

ʔanwī	ʔal-	ðahāb	ɣadan
I intend	the	to go	tomorrow

4.17. The problems, then, for Arabic speakers learning English, fall into several general categories:

Word order within the verb phrase:

1) Appropriate use of to. With some modals (able, need,

have, ought, etc.) to is required; with others (may, can, would, will, etc.) to is not allowed. Arabic speakers generally have trouble with to. They are more likely to omit it than to overuse it.

2) Appropriate use of not. The main problem lies in learning when not can be reduced. After many modals (would, can, will, etc.) not is often reduced (wouldn't, can't, won't, etc.). May is never reduced (may not). Arabic speakers are not familiar with vowel reduction as it occurs in Engish, and are likely to use the full form in all cases.

4.18. Many of the modals have more than one meaning. This may cause difficulties when Arabic equivalents do not exactly coincide.

1) Arabic does not distinguish between must and have to. Thus:

You must pay the rent.
You have to pay the rent.

are both rendered in Arabic as:

lā	budd	ʔan	tadfaʕ	ʔal-	ʔujra
no	escape	that	you pay	the	rent

This becomes a problem in the negative, when the Arabic speaker is likely to say You don't have to when he means You must not.

2) Would has no direct equivalent in Arabic. Consequently, almost any construction in which it is used is likely to prove difficult for the Arabic-speaking student. If preference is being indicated, would is generally used in English:

I would like to go to town.

Arabic uses the verb /ʔuḥibb/ like, love in the present tense:

ʔuḥibb	ʔan	ʔaðhab	ʔilā	ʔal-	madīna
I like	that	I go	to	the	town

The present tense in Arabic has both a general meaning (going to town is something I like to do) and a predictive meaning (going to town is something I will like to do) depending on the context. Consequently, the Arabic speaker is likely to use the simple present tense in English:

Do you like to go to the movies?

instead of Would you like to go to the movies?

3) Appropriate use of will is sometimes confusing to the Arabic-speaking student. Again, this is rooted in the fact that the present tense in Arabic has a predictive meaning. The present (without will) has a predictive meaning in English also, as in:

We're having a party tonight.

However, it's much more extensive in Arabic. Consequently, the Arabic speaker is likely to say in English:

I think that works fine.

when he intends a future meaning:

I think that will work fine.

4) The distinctions between can and could may prove difficult for the Arabic speaker to master. Will and can imply a definite possibility:

I will go.
I can go.

Would and could imply conditions contrary to fact:

I would go, if...
I could go, if...

Arabic uses a special term /law/ (one of three words meaning if) to imply conditions contrary to fact. Thus:

I will go tomorrow if you pay me the money.

and

I would go tomorrow if you paid me the money.

receive the same translation in Arabic:

saʔaðhab	ɣadan	ʔiðā	dafaʕt	lī	ʔal-	nuqūd
I will go	tomorrow	if	you paid	me	the	money

The Arabic speaker does not interpret would as indicating conditions contrary to fact, looking instead at if for his clue. Consequently the student is generally likely to use will in situations where would is appropriate, and vice versa.

5) For equivalents of may, can, will, and shall, Arabic uses a non-past form, in all cases. Certain situations in English call for a past tense form: might, could, would, or should:

I might have to bury a camel.

Here Arabic uses present tense:

min	ʔal- mumkin	wa	lā	budd	ʔan	ʔadfin	jamal
from the	possible	and	no	escape	that	I bury	camel

Arabic-speaking students of English have an extremely difficult time discerning when to use past and when to use non-past forms for these modals.

4.19. Learning to handle hypothetical situations in a new language is always difficult. This rule holds true for Arabic speakers learning English, because grammatical devices in the two languages differ for almost all equivalent situations:

English uses if with present tense or future modal plus present tense to indicate possible conditions which are likely to occur:

If you go, I'll go.
If he goes, we all go.
If the verb is in the present tense...

Arabic has three words meaning if, all of which require that the verb be in the past tense.

1) /ʔin/ if has a predictive meaning, roughly equivalent to the first two examples above. Thus:

ʔin | ðahab
if | he went

can be rendered in English as:

...if he is going to go...
...if he will go...
...if he goes...

2) /ʔiðā/ if refers to situations which do occur, as in the last example above. Thus:

ʔiðā | ðahab
if | he went

can be rendered in English as:

...if he goes...
...if he should (or will) go...
...when he goes...

3) /law/ if refers to contrary-to-fact or purely hypothetical situations. Thus:

law | ðahab
if | he went

is rendered into English as:

...if he were to go...
...if he had gone (in a past time context)...

English uses past tense only to indicate strictly hypothetical situations. Arabic speakers learning English often overuse past tense with if, indicating a hypothetical situation when such is not intended. Compare:

If I sell my horse before the end of the year,
I will give you some money.

If I sold my horse before the end of the year,
I would give you some money.

These both have the same translation in Arabic, except that /ʔiðā/ if is used in the first example, while /law/ conditional if is used for the second. Since past tense is used in both cases, the Arabic speaker is likely to use past tense in both cases in English also:

If I sold my horse before the end of the year,
I would give you some money. (with future meaning)

4.20. English past time hypothetical situations require an additional past morpheme. The accompanying modal (will) also adds a past morpheme:

If I had sold my horse before the end of the year,
I would have given you some money.

As explained above, Arabic in all hypothetical situations uses /law/ conditional if plus past tense. If the situation is in past time, this is indicated by the context. The problem, then, for the Arabic speaker, is in learning to use the additional past tense morphemes of English. He will normally simply forget to insert them:

*If I sold my horse before the end of the year,
I will give you some money.

4.21. The past tense modal would is used in the result clause of hypothetical situations:

If I sold my horse, I would give you some money.

Arabic has no equivalent for would. Hypothetical situations are signaled by the use of /law/ if. The Arabic speaker will look to the English equivalent if and simply forget about using would. Thus, a common type of error is:

*If I got some money I give it to you.

4.22 Wish is used in both languages to indicate hypothetical situations. Wish in English takes a mandatory past tense morpheme in the verb of the complementary clause. Thus:

wish + past tense = present condition, incomplete action:
I wish I knew your name.

wish + past perfect = completed event.
I wish I had brought it with me.

wish + would = future
I wish you would interrupt me if I speak too long.

The first construction of the preceding examples can be used only with verbs whose action occurs over a period of time: like, love, know, want, understand, etc.

Past tense is not required in Arabic for /layta/ would that. Thus:

1) /layta/ + pronoun suffix + present indicative =
   a) present or future time
or b) incomplete action

I wish he loved me (as I do him).
or I wish he would love me.

laytahu	yuḥibbunī
I wish	he (will) love me

This construction is, depending on the context, equivalent to English examples as in the first two wish sentences above.

2) /layta/ + pronoun suffix + past or past perfect = completed action

I wish he had said so.

laytahu	qad	qāl	ðālik
I wish	past-perfect particle	he said	so

This construction is equivalent to the second English wish sentence above.

There are several possible errors for the Arabic speaker learning English:

1) The use of wish + past tense, indicating present condition, with verbs for which this is not possible:

*I wish he ate.
*I wish he came.

2) Proper use of would. Arabic speakers have difficulty with would in all of its occurrences. They are likely to use will instead:

*I wish he will go.
*I wish he will eat.

4.23. The past modals, could, should, and would can refer to future time:

I could be talking about Caesar tomorrow, if...
I should be talking about Caesar tomorrow, if...
I would be talking about Caesar tomorrow, if...

Compare with the future modals:

I can be talking about Caesar tomorrow, if...
I shall be talking about Caesar tomorrow, if...
I will be talking about Caesar tomorrow, if...

Because these are conditional sentences, Arabic requires past or past perfect tense in all cases:

I can (or could) be talking about Caesar tomorrow, if...

mumkin	ʔan	ʔakūn	qad	bada?t	ʔal-	hadīθ	ʕan
possible	that	I will be		I started	the	to talk	about

qayṣar	ɣadan
Caesar	tomorrow

The Arabic speaker is likely to use could in all cases when learning English.

4.24. English has no required order for if...would clauses:
If we had left earlier, we would be there by now.
We would be there by now if we had left earlier.

Arabic typically puts the if clause first and the result clause second. In cases where the result clause comes first, the ordinary rules of verb tense apply, rather than the rules that are peculiar to conditional sentences. Arabic speakers will have difficulty understanding sentences starting with would clauses.

4.25. The English progressive formation BE + ing expresses continuous action:

He is studying.
I was walking.

Verbs which refer to states of mind usually refer to general time, or to a timeless situation. Such verbs include need, remember, desire, know, like, hate, prefer, mean, etc. These verbs, because of their meaning, are never used in the progressive.

The most common use of the progressive is to signal the difference between continuous and specific time:

I was talking about Caesar when you interrupted me.
I was talking: a progressive, longer period
you interrupted me: a specific happening

The progressive constitutes one of the most difficult aspects of English grammar for the Arabic speaker to master. There are no special forms to indicate continuous action in Arabic. Consequently, there are no forms which the student can correlate with the English he is learning. For all verbs, except those of motion and of remaining, continuous action is expressed with the simple indicative form:

I am studying now.
?innī | ?adrus | ?al?ān
I | study | now

For verbs of motion and remaining, continuous action is expressed by the active participle:

He is leaving.
huwa | ðāhib
he | leaving

The Arabic speaker carries over his semantic classification into English. Thus, with any verb other than one of motion or remaining, the student is likely to use the simple indicative when the progressive is appropriate:

He studied.
He studies.

rather then:

He was studying.
He is studying.

4.26. The modal progressive will cause problems for the student, since Arabic uses the simple future to express continuous action in the future. Thus:

He will study.

will be used when the progressive

He will be studying.

is intended.

4.27. Continuous activity from a time in the past up to the moment of speaking is expressed in English by the present perfect progressive:

I have been studying English for a long time.

Here Arabic uses the simple present:

?adrus	?al-	?inglīziyyi	min	mudda	ṭawīla
I study	the	English	from	time	long

Consequently the student may use simple present in English:

*I study English for a long time.

4.28. Past perfect progressive in English emphasizes the continuation of a past action that occurred immediately before an-

other action in the past:

They had been playing tennis for only a few minutes when they lost the ball.

Arabic uses the simple past in this situation:

I had been studying English a short time before I was sent to the United States.

qad	kuntu	ʔadrus	ʔal- ʔinglīziyya	limudda	qaṣīra
	I was	I study	the English	for time	short

hīn	buʕiθt	ʔilā	ʔal- wilayāt	ʔal- muttaḥida
when	I was sent	to	the states	the united

Consequently, the Arabic speaker may often use the simple past for this situation in English:

I studied English a short time before I was sent to the United States. (meaning had studied)

4.29. The non-perfect and perfect aspect of the verb phrase contrast in English:

He eats apples. – He has eaten apples.
He will eat apples. – He will have eaten apples.
He ate apples. – He had eaten apples.

Tense is defined as a morphological term: a paradigmatic set of verb forms without any necessary reference to meaning or function. Tense excludes verb phrases such as present perfect has gone, modal will go etc. Thus, English has two tenses: present (e.g. go) and past (e.g. went).

Tense carries no reference to chronological, real time in English. Present tense refers to an event occurring at the time that the utterance is spoken:

I see Rudolph.

Absolute or chronological time is expressed by adverbials: now, today, this century, just now, a few days ago.

In English, the matter of chronological time is essential to the proper usage of the perfect verb phrase.

Present perfect refers to an event which happened in the past but which is relevant to what is happening now:

He has been here since 1950 (and is still here).
I have been in New York only once (up to now).
He has just left (before now).

Past perfect refers to events which occurred before another event or situation which occurred in the past:

He had just left before you came.
He had already heard the story (before you told him).

The perfect formative can be used in sentences which refer to future time.

She will have left by the time her parents arrive.

The perfect formative consists of:

present: have + -en
I have eaten.

past: have + past + -en
I had eaten.

future: modal + have + -en
I will have eaten.

The perfect in Arabic does not correlate with any English formative. Whereas the English perfect is marked for time, that is, it describes an event in time-relation to another, Arabic perfect describes simply a completed action or a series of completed actions. It operates in opposition to the imperfect aspect, which describes progressive, habitual, or stative situations. Both perfective and imperfective aspects, like tense in English, make no reference to chronological time. In this respect, Arabic perfective aspect differs radically from English. The following tables illustrate the differences between perfective and imperfective in Arabic.

Imperfective Aspect

Arabic	English Translation	description
(present)		
yadrus	1. he is studying	progressive
he studies	2. he studies	stative, i.e. he studies now
	3. he studies	habitual, i.e. he always studies
(future)		
(sa) | yadrus	4. he will study	predictive, i.e., we leave tomorrow
(will) | he studies		
(past)		
kān | yadrus	1. he studied	e.g. he always studied
was | he studies	2. he used to study	habitual
	3. he would study	habitual
	4. he was studying	progressive

kān (sa) yadrus — 5. he was going to study — predictive
was(will)he studies

Perfective Aspect

Arabic	English Translation
(past) daras he studied	1. he studied (at 10:00) 2. he did study (for 5 hours and finished) This form describes action completed before the sentence is uttered.
(past) kān | qad | daras was | | he studied	1. he had studied (before some time in the past)
(future) yakūn | qad | daras will | | he studied	1. he will have studied (before some point in the future)

Past and future perfect are similar enough in the two languages so that the Arabic-speaking student has relatively little trouble learning them in English. Present perfect constructions, however, are extremely difficult. The problem lies in the fact that English present perfect is marked for present time, so that only present time adverbs may be used with it. The student will consistently use past time adverbs with it, as he can in Arabic:

*I have eaten it yesterday.

This remains a serious problem, even for advanced students of English.

4.30 English present perfect constructions (also including verbs of motion or remaining) may also be expressed in Arabic using an active participle:

He has studied.
huwa | dāris
he | studying

This active participle has a perfective meaning, describing a completed action in a time period up to, and including, the present.

The Arabic speaker will often attribute this meaning to the -ing form in English. Consequently, he may make such statements as:

Ahmad is drinking an ocean of beer.

by which he means that Ahmad has already swallowed all of this beer and is now drunk.

4.31. The -ing form cannot be used in English with such verbs as like, hate, understand, want, know, when these verbs occur in present tense:

*I am liking this girl.

This is because these verbs, by definition, imply action over a period of time, and using them in progressive constructions would be redundant.

The Arabic active participle can easily be used with these verbs:

?anā	hābib	hāðihi	?al-	fatāh
I	liking	this	the	girl

This construction means I have liked this girl for a period of time up to and including now. The student will carry this meaning into English, producing such sentences as:

*I am not knowing what to do.

4.32. Passive constructions in English may cause difficulty for Arabic speakers:

He ate.	He was eaten.
They were beating their wives.	They were being beaten.
We built this building.	This building was built.

In both languages, a verb change is used when forming passive constructions. English uses the -en form of the verb, eaten, written; whereas the Arabic verb undergoes a vowel change: /?akala/ he ate becomes /?ukila/ he was eaten. Learning to make the proper -en forms is not difficult for the student. However, learning their proper auxiliary constructions, especially those using being, is a major problem.

Passive constructions do not have the same conventional usage in the two languages. Any situation which requires the specification of an agent must be expressed with an active construction in Arabic. Hence, the sentence:

This building was built yesterday.

has a passive equivalent in Arabic:

buniya	hāða	?al-	mabnā	?ams
(was) built	this	the	building	yesterday

while the sentence:

This building was built by an amateur.

has an active equivalent in Arabic:

haða	ʔal- mabna	banāh	muhandis	ṣaɣīr
this	the building	he built it	architect	young

The by plus agent construction does not occur in Arabic passive sentences; the agent must be the subject of an active verb. The Arabic passive is used when:

1) The need to emphasize the object warrants it.
2) The agent is unknown, or is unimportant.

In this respect, Arabic usage often does not correspond to English. Consequently, the Arabic-speaking student will frequently make such inappropriate statements as:

*Tea was drunk by me at the party.

4.33. Three types of constructions are possible in English when an indirect object is used with the passive formative:

He gave me a book.
I was given a book.
A book was given to me.

Analogous Arabic constructions are essentially the same; the differences are of distribution. Most Arabic verbs require a construction like the last sentence above:

A cake was baked for me.

kaʃka	xubizat	lī
cake	was baked	for me

A few verbs, including the msot common verb of giving, /ʔaʃṭā/ to give, are used exclusively with a construction like the second sentence above:

I was given a book.

ʔuʃṭaytu	kitāb
I was given	book

The student will usually carry over this distinction into English, using the construction like the last English sentence above in most cases, and a construction like the second sentence for some, including those with give.

4.34. Many English adverbs are formed from adjectives by the use of prefixes and suffixes:

1)	suffix	-ly	recently, quickly
2)	prefix	a-	away, abroad, aloft
3)	suffix	-wise	likewise, lengthwise
4)	suffix	-wards	upwards, downwards

(Variants without final s: backward, forward, may be either adverbs or adjectives)

5) A few adverbs have the same form as their corresponding adjectives: hard, fast, late, early.

Arabic has very few words which are strictly adverbs. They include:

/hunā/ here	/ʔaydan/ also
/hunāk/ there	/ʔamsi/ yesterday

4.35. Other adverbial expressions are formed in the following ways:

1) Nouns or adjectives in the accusative case:

/masāʔan/	in the evening, evenings
/dāʔiman/	permanently, always
/musriʕan/	hastily, in haste

2) Prepositional phrases:

/biʕināya/	with care, carefully

3) The cognate accusative-- this is the use of a verbal noun derived from a verb as the object of that verb, as in the English to dream a dream. Thus: She really walloped him or She walloped a wallop is in Arabic:

She really hit him.		She hit him hard.	
ḍarabathu	ḍarban	ḍarabathu	ḍarban ʃadīdan
she hit him	a hitting	she hit him	a violent hitting

Arabic uses a modified cognate accusative to express adverbials of manner.

4.36. Adverbs and adverbial expressions in English normally occur in the following order:

We	drink	coffee	in the snack bar	every morning	at 9:20.
S	V	O	Place	Freq.	Time

I	drive	my car	extra carefully	when it's raining.
S	V	O	M/M	Time

He	walks	to work	all the time	to save money.
S	V	Place	Freq.	R/P

Sub.	Verb	Object	Place	Manner/Means	Frequency	Time	Reason/Purpose
S	V	O		M/M	Freq.		R/P

Arabic generally uses the same sequence, though adverbs of place may follow those of manner, frequency, or time:

I see her at the symphony occasionally.

ʔarāhā	mirāran	fi	ḥafalāt ʔal-	simfūniyya
I see her	occasionally	in	parties the	symphony
S-V	Freq.			Place

Since many variations from the norm are allowed in English:

I see her occasionally at the symphony.
I occasionally see her at the symphony.
Occasionally I see her at the symphony.

adverbial word order does not constitute a major problem for Arabic speakers.

4.37. Adverbs of frequency or duration in English very often occur directly before main verbs or after auxiliaries:

I usually go to bed at 10:00.
I have never met him.

The frequency adverbs always, never, ever, seldom, rarely, and still hardly ever occur in any other position.

Arabic adverbial formatives generally follow a sequence comparable to that in English. However, many words which are translation equivalents between English and Arabic are not necessarily grammatical equivalents. For instance, the English adverb never is translated as a noun /ʔabadan/ in Arabic. Arabic equivalents for the above adverbs may be:

1) Nouns: /ʔabadan/ never. This form requires a negative verb and must fall at the end of the sentence:

I have never met him.
lam | ʔuqābilhu | ʔabadan
didn't | I meet him | ever

2) Adjectives: /dāʔiman/ always, /nādiran/ seldom. As in English, Arabic adjectives have variable word order. They normally precede the verb, but may equally follow or come at the end of the sentence:

/dāʔiman yalʕab hunā/ always he plays here
/yalʕab dāʔiman hunā/ he plays always here
/yalʕab hunā dāʔiman/ he plays here always

3) Verbs: /qallamā/ it is rare that, rarely, /māzāl/ he did not cease, still. If the verb constitutes an invariable phrase: /qallamā/ it is rare that, it must occur in sentence-initial position:

He rarely goes to the library.
qallamā | yaðhab | ilā | ʔal- maktaba
it is rare that | he goes | to | the library

If it is inflected: /māzāl/ he did not cease, the verb occurs in normal verb position:

He still misses her.
māzāl | yaftaqiduhā
he did not cease | he misses her

Arabic speakers do not have too much difficulty with word order. The main problem for them lies in the choice of the appropriate word to suit the occasion. This is a vocabulary problem.

4.38. Preverbs are those adverbs which occur after the first auxiliary verb:

He has always finished his work.
almost
hardly
rarely
seldom
never

Arabic equivalents for English preverbs may occur in several positions:

1) Following the verb:

He has always finished his work.

yanhī	ʕamalah	dāʔiman
he finishes	his work	always

2) Sentence initially:

He has rarely finished his work.

nādiran	mā	yanhī	ʕamalah
rarely	that	he finishes	his work

3) Sentence finally:

He has never finished his work.

lam	yanhī	ʕamalah	muṭlaqan
has not	he finishes	his work	absolutely

The Arabic speaker will tend to view the English verb as an inseparable unit. He will put the adverb in any of the positions which are normal in Arabic. He will not separate the parts of the verb. Some common types of mistakes are:

*Rarely he has finished his work.
*He has finished his work always.

4.39. In English, the comparative of adverbs enables us to compare verb phrases:

I speak clearly. + You speak clearly. ⟹
I speak more clearly than you do.

The second verb phrase in such sentences can be omitted, as above, or used in its abbreviated form, with a simple auxiliary:

I speak more clearly than you do.
You can run faster than I can.

The adverbial is made comparative in Arabic in the following ways:

1) If the adverbial is an adjective the comparative form of that adjective is used:

/ḥasan/ well, as in I will do well.
/ʔaḥsan/ better, as in I will do better.

If the adjective is an adjective of color, a derived participle /ʔakθar/ greater, plus a noun in the accusative case is used:

He is paler than she.

huwa	ʔakθar	ʔiṣfirāran	minhā
he	greater	(as to) yellowness	from her

The Arabic speaker will often use the accusative in English also:

He is paler than her.

2) Other adverbials in Arabic are made comparative by a following /ʔakθar/ more:

...more clearly...

biwuḍūḥ	ʔakθar
with clarity	more

I speak more clearly than you.

ʔatakallam	biwuḍūḥ	ʔakθar	mink	
I speak	with clarity	more	from you	

3) Since Arabic has no auxiliaries, the second verb phrase cannot be reduced as it can in English. The full form of the verb is repeated:

I studied more diligently than you did.

darast	biʕināya	wa	wajuhd	ʔakθar	minmā	darast	ʔanta
I studied	with care	and	effort	more	than	you studied	you

The Arabic speaker is likely to use either the fully deleted form, as in 2) above, or the full form of the verb. He will not often reduce the verb phrase to a simple auxiliary form.

4.40. Noun and verb phrases can be directly compared with adjective and adverbs in English. Thus we can compare one thing with another:

Al is old. + Mary is old. ⇒
Al is as old as Mary.

Arabic uses essentiallly the same construction as English for this:

Al is as old as Mary.
al | kabīr | miθl | maryam
Al | old | like | Mary

The English construction uses as ____ as while Arabic uses /miθl/ like. Arabic speakers may often forget the first as in the English construction:

*Al is old as Mary. or *Al is old like Mary.

4.41. Adverbials of degree modify adverbs and adjectives:

George is very tall.
George drives quite fast.

Arabic has an equivalent construction, in which adverbials modify adverbs and adjectives. However, word order is different, which causes problems:

George is very tall.
george | ṭawīl | jiddan
George | tall | very

Arabic speakers are likely to use this order in English:

*George is tall extremely.

4.42. Adverbs of location in English may be attributive:

He lives on the hill.
The house on the hill is old. (which is on the hill)

Arabic adverbials of location are seldom attributive. A relative clause is used to express attribution after a definite noun:

ʔal- manzil | ʔallaði | ʕala | ʔal- tall | qadīm
the house | which | on | the hill | old

The Arabic speaker has no difficulty using the attributive construction in English.

4.43. Derived Verb Forms

A characteristic feature of Arabic verbs is the derived verb system. In addition to the basic verb type consisting of three consonants and a vowel pattern (called Form I verbs), e.g. /daras-/ studied, /-drus-/ study, there are nine other sets of perfect-imperfect stems that can be derived from Form I verbs (or other derived verbs, or from nouns) by regular rules, and with fairly consistent ranges of meaning. For example, from /daras/ studied (Form I) is derived a Form II causative verb /darras/ to cause someone to study, but there are also many with intensive meaning, e.g. /kasara/ (Form I) meaning to break but /kassara/ (Form II) meaning to break to pieces, to smash. A few

Form II verbs are estimative, e.g. /ṣadaqa/ (I) to tell the truth but /ṣaddaqa/ (II) to believe that someone is telling the truth, to believe someone, and some are derived from nouns, e.g. /xayyama/ to pitch camp from /xayma/ tent. All Form II verbs are of the pattern CaCCaC (C = any consonant, CC = identical pair) for the perfect tense and CaCCiC for the imperfect tense. To sum up Form II verbs, these verbs are of the pattern CaCC/iC, have the meanings a) causative, b) intensive or c) estimative if derived from verbs, or d) applicative if derived from nouns. On pages 107-108 is a chart of Derived Forms, summarizing their forms and the main semantic features.

While it is impossible always to predict the meaning a given verb will have in a given derived verb Form, most verbs do fit into the scheme given in the chart. Recurring themes throughout the forms are: reflexive-passive, identified with /-t-/(Forms V, VI, VIII, and X); passive, identified with /-n/ (Form VII); causative, identified with doubling of radical (Form II), /ʔa-/ (Form IV), or /-s/ (Form X); and associative, identified with vowel length (Form III).

The word patterns of the derived verbs are summarized below:

Form	Perfect Tense	Active Participle	Passive Participle	Verbal Noun
II	CaCCaC	muCaCCiC	muCaCCaC	taCCīC
III	CāCaC	muCāCīC	muCāCāC	muCāCaCa/CiCāC
IV	ʔaCCaC	muCCiC	muCCaC	ʔiCCāC
V	taCaCCaC	mutaCaCCiC	mutaCaCCaC	taCaCCuC
VI	taCāCaC	mutaCāCīC	mutaCāCāC	taCāCuC
VII	ʔinCaCaC	munCaCiC		ʔinCiCāC
VIII	ʔiCtaCaC	muCtaCiC	muCtaCaC	ʔiCtiCāC
IX	ʔiCCaCC	muCCaCC		ʔiCCiCāC
X	ʔistaCCaC	mustaCCiC	mustaCCaC	ʔistiCCāC

4.44. English uses a number of particles and prepositions to form two-word verbs:

away	- boil away	over	- fall over
back	- grow back	through	- fall through
by	- pass by	up	- back up
down	- break down	about	- bring about
in	- pitch in	across	- put across
off	- cool off	aside	- lay aside
on	- catch on	forth	- put forth
out	- blow out	at	- yell at

Arabic also uses two word verbs. However, there are several major differences. English uses particles with intransitive verbs:

come over
start out
send away

Chart IV

Derived Verb Forms					
Form	Stems Perfect - Imperfect	Meaning & Origin	Active Participle	Passive Participle	Verbal Noun
I	daras - drus to study	basic meaning	dāris one who studies	madrūs studied	dars study, studying
II	darras - darris to instruct	causative cf. daras I	mudarris instructing	mudarras instructed	tadrīs to instruct, instruction
	kassar - kassir to smash	intensive of kasarI 'break'	mukassir smashing	mukassar smashed	taksīr to smash
III	This Form has associative meaning: to associate someone in an activity				
	qātal - qātil to fight with someone	associative of qatal 'to kill'	muqātil fighting	muqātal fought with	muqātala qitāl fighting, battle
IV	?ajlas - ujlis to seat someone	causative of jalas I 'to sit'	mujlis seating	mujlas seated	?ijlās to seat
V	tamaddad - tamaddad to stretch out	reflexive of II: maddad 'to stretch'	mutamaddid stretching out		tamaddud to stretch out
	taḥarrar - taḥarrar to be freed	passive of II: ḥarrar 'to free'	mutaḥarrir being freed		taḥarrur liberation

Chart IV (cont.)

Form	Stems Perfect - Imperfect	Meaning & Origin	Active Participle	Passive Participle	Verbal Noun
VI	taqātal - taqātal to fight with each other	reciprocal of III qātal 'to fight with'	mutaqātil fighting with each other		taqātul to fight with each other
VII	ʔinṣaraf - inṣarif to go away	reflexive	munṣarif going away		ʔinṣirāf to go away
VIII	ʔijtamaʕ - jtamiʕ to gather, meet	reflexive of I jamaʕ 'to gather, collect something'	mujtamiʕ gathering		ʔijtimāʕ to meet
IX	This pattern is used only for colors or defects				
	ʔiḥmarar - ḥmarir to turn red	cf. ʔaḥmar 'red'	muḥmarr becoming red		ʔiḥmirār to become red
X	ʔistaslam - staslim to surrender oneself	causative - reflexive cf. ʔaslam 'to surrender something'	mustaslim surrendering		ʔistislām surrender
	ʔistafham - stafhim to enquire	requestative cf. fahima 'to understand'	mustafhim enquiring		ʔistifhām enquiry
	ʔistaḥsan - staḥsin to find someone good, approve of someone	estimative cf. ḥasan 'good'	mustaḥsin approving	mustaḥsan approved of	ʔistiḥsān to approve

Arabic has no two-word intransitive verbs. Thus:

Come on over				
ta?āla	hunā	or	ta?āla	liziyāratinā
come	here		come	for to visit us

Arabic students have difficulty learning to use these particles, which they interpret as prepositions without objects.

4.45. Particles are not used with transitive verbs in Arabic. Thus, such verbs as put away, write down, bring out, cross off, do not have two word translation equivalents in Arabic. Thus:

I'm putting away the dishes.

becomes in Arabic either:

?uzīl	?al-	?aṭbāq
I remove	the	dishes

or:

?aḍaʕ	?al-	?aṭbāq	fī	maḥallihā	
I put	the	dishes	in	her place	

In the latter example, Arabic uses a preposition /fī/ in. However, this remains a part of the prepositional phrase, and is not considered an adverb.

With transitive verbs, as with intransitive verbs, Arabic speakers have difficulty with proper use of the particle. They interpret the particle as a preposition, which in Arabic requires its own object, and they have difficulty in thinking of it as a part of the verb. The Arabic speaker will tend to omit particles with transitive verbs, e.g., *Put your blue suit rather than Put your blue suit on.

Particles can be separated from the verb in English:

I'm putting away the dishes.
I'm putting the dishes away.
I'm putting them away.

If a pronoun is used, as in the third example, the particle must be separated. This causes no problem for the Arabic speaker since object pronouns are always suffixed to the verb. Word order with a noun object is optional and causes no problems. Two-word verbs in Arabic consist solely of verb plus preposition. These prepositions are syntactically prepositions, not adverbs, and are part of the normal prepositional phrase. Often English verbs requiring prepositions do not correspond to these in Arabic. In such cases the Arab may have difficulty using the proper English form.

4.46. Many adverbials in English describe the way in which an

action is performed. These are called manner adverbials:

They drive slowly.
They go by bus.
He answered with a smile.

There are no manner adverbs, such as slowly, in Arabic. Manner adverbials include prepositional phrases and participles:

They drive slowly.
yasūqūn | bibuṭ?
they drive | with slowness

Where Arabic uses a participle as an adverbial, the English equivalent is a verb in progressive form:

He is hurrying.
huwa | musri?
he | hurrying

The Arabic constructions do not cause much interference for the student learning English. The major problem lies in the proper use of the -ly suffix. A likely mistake is:

*He drives cautious

4.47 Infinitives are used as complements of included sentences in English when the speaker is influencing or causing another to act:

He told me to go to school.
advised
warned
urged, etc.

Infinitives are not used in this manner in Arabic. The Arabic equivalent is verb plus direct object plus subjunctive verb clause (as in the first sentence below) or verb plus preposition plus verbal noun (as in the second sentence below):

I advised him to go.
naṣahtahu | ?an | yaðhab
I advised him | that | he go

or naṣahtahu | bi | ?al- ðahāb
I advised him | with | the going

Arabic speakers do not have much difficulty learning to use the English infinitive in this construction.

PART 5: SYNTAX: NOUN PHRASE

5.0. Introduction to Noun Phrases

Noun phrases are words, or constructions made of words functioning like a single word, which perform the following clause functions in Arabic:

a) Subject
b) Object of verb or preposition
c) Modifiers

A noun phrase may consist of:

a) Nouns:

the school
?al- madrasa
the school

b) Demonstrative plus defined noun:

this school
hāðihi | ?al- madrasa
this | the school

c) Noun plus attributive adjective:

a secondary school		the new officer	
madrasa	θānawiyya	?al- ḍābiṭ	?al- jadīd
school	secondary	the officer	the new

d) Two nouns: the second in genitive case may modify the first noun in any of the following ways:

1) Possession:

the officer's wife		the dog's tongue	
?imra?atu	?al- ḍābiṭ	lisān	?al- kalb
woman	the officer	tongue	the dog

2) Limitation:

doctor
ṭabīb

pediatrician
ṭabīb | ?atfāl
doctor | children

a coffee cup (not a tea cup)
finjān | qahwa
cup | coffee

3) Whole and its part:

one of the boys
?aḥad | ?al- ?awlād
one | the boys

4) Container - Contents:

a cup of coffee
finjān | qahwa
cup | coffee

5) Naming:

the city of Baghdad
madīnat | baɣdād
city | Baghdad

Note that in this construct, the first noun never takes the definite article, while the second one may or may not:

e) Adjective, usually definite:

Did the other one come too?
hal | jā? | ?al- ?āxar | ?ayḍan
question particle | he came | the other | also

f) Adjective plus noun wherein the definite noun delimits the applicability of the adjective:

the officer handsome of face
?al- ḍābiṭ | ?al- ḥasan | ?al- wajh
the officer | the handsome | the face

Compare the English fleet of foot, hard of hearing, etc.

g) Pronouns:

It is not he.
laysa | huwa
it is not | he

h) Demonstratives:

That will be fine.
sayakūn | ðālik | ḥasan
he will be | that | good

i) Nominalized clauses: clauses may be nominalized by:

/?an/ that:

It is necessary that he go.
yajib | ?an | yaðhab
it is necessary | that | he go

Here /?an yaðhab/ is subject of the verb /yajib/.

/?anna/ that:

I know that he will go.
?aʕrif | ?annahu | sayaðhab
I know | that he | he will go

Here /?annahu sayaðhab/ is the object of the verb /?aʕrif/.

/?an/ is followed by a verb in the subjunctive and denotes an action in the abstract (the idea of his going), while /?anna/ is followed by a statement of fact (he has gone, he will go).

5.1. Number Classes of Nouns

1) English has several number classes. Certain nouns are unmarked for number:

Chinese, species, series, salmon

Others are always singular:

advice, assistance, billiards

Some are always plural:

cattle, clergy, police, riches, shears, vermin

Most nouns have both singular and plural forms. Some have irregular plurals:

ox - oxen	tooth - teeth
man - men	louse - lice
foot - feet	die - dice

Certain nouns with a final voiceless labio-dental fricative become voiced in the plural. /-z/ is suffixed:

calf - calves
elf - elves
leaf - leaves

/-Iz/ is added after all sibilants in forming plurals:

glass - glasses	sash - sashes
phase - phases	match - matches
garage - garages	badge - badges

/-z/ is added after voiced non-sibilants:

boy - boys
bed - beds
mug - mugs

/-s/ is added after voiceless non-sibilants:

cup - cups
pit - pits

However, a few nouns are semantically plural but grammatically singular, e.g. these collective nouns:

class, crew, family, committee, government

2) Arabic has two general types of number class:
Sound Plurals. These are formed by the addition of suffixes. Nouns and adjectives which can form sound plurals show

distinctions for gender and case in both singular and plural:

		Masculine	Feminine
Singular		mudarris (teacher)	mudarrisa (teacher)
Plural	Nominative	mudarrisūn	mudarrisāt
	Genitive	mudarrisīn	mudarrisat
	Accusative	mudarrisīn	mudarrisāt

Masculine sound plurals can refer only to individual human males. Feminine sound plurals also can refer only to human females, while all non-human animates as well as all inanimates normally take feminine singular agreement.

Broken Plurals. These are formed by means of a vowel change or a combination of vowel change plus suffix. They fall into a number of patterns, often predictably derived from singular nouns and adjectives according to form and meaning. There are many broken plural patterns; none of them fully predictable. Examples are kitāb - kutub book(s); fāris - fursān horseman- horsemen. English examples which follow this type of rule are:

foot - feet child - children

Collective nouns in Arabic are made singular by suffixing the singular feminine suffix /a/. These singular nouns can then be made plural by the feminine sound suffix:

rock /ṣaxr/ a rock /ṣaxra/ rocks /ṣaxrāt/

Some collective nouns have a combination sound-broken plural. Others have no singular.

Arabic speakers have a number of problems in learning English plurals.

Arabic has no words which are unmarked for number. Arabic speakers will be confused by such words as gallows, series, deer, sheep, and their proper usage in singular and plural.

Certain English words are always singular. Learning proper usage of these is a problem, especially with such words as billiards, news, mumps, phonetics, etc., which have the plural suffix. Another difficulty lies in the Arabic speaker's tendency to make certain words plural, such as information (informations).

Certain English words are always plural: cattle, clergy, poultry, vermin, auspices, clothes. Arabic speakers have difficulty with those which do not have the plural suffix, like cattle.

Arabs will have difficulty with those words which have irregular plural formation:

ox - oxen man - men foot - feet etc.

Each of these must be learned separately.

The voiceless fricatives which require voicing in the plural are a problem for Arabic speakers:

calf - calves wife - wives etc.

Those nouns of Latin or Greek derivation: stimulus, nebula, phenomenon, etc., have plurals which must be learned separately.

The vast majority of English plurals are formed by the suffix -s . The major problem for Arabic speakers is learning when this sound is voiced or voiceless, or /-Iz/.

5.2. Compound Nouns

Compound nouns do not exist in Arabic. Consequently, there are several problems involved for the student.

1) Some compounds are written as separate words, others as a single unit:

milk bottle beekeeper
cherry pie summertime

The Arabic speaker tends to write all compounds as separate words.

2) Compounds have variable stress patterns. Some have heavier stress on the first part:

frúit juice
cúpboard

Others have stress on both elements:

béef stéw
kíd glóves

Arabic speakers will generally stress both elements of a compound:

mílk bóttle

Learning proper stress is extremely difficult.

3) While Arabic does not have compound nouns like those in English, it does use noun constructs where two nouns can occur next to each other. These are roughly equivalent to English compounds which are derived from joining transformations:

They are students.

plus: They study engineering.

becomes: They are engineering students.

In English compounds, as in this example, the first word modifies the second. Arabic uses the reverse word order, and the second word modifies the first:

They are engineering students.
hum ṭullāb handasa
they students engineering

Consequently, Arabic speakers will misinterpret many English compounds. Fruit juice, for instance, will be misconstrued as a fruit for juice, a doorknob as a kind of door, etc.

5.3. Adjectives as Noun Phrase

Whenever the noun of a noun phrase is people, and the noun phrase has the form the plus adjective plus noun, the noun people may be deleted:

the poor people ⟶ the poor
the interested people ⟶ the interested

Arabic has a similar construction in which the noun can be deleted after an adjective. However, in the Arabic construction, number is always specified:

ʔal- muhtamm	ʔal- muhtammūn
the interested (one)	the interested (they)

Consequently, Arabic speakers will interpret such English phrases as the poor, and the outstanding as referring to a single individual:

the poor one

instead of a general class of people.

5.4. Noun-Forming Derivational Morphemes:

A number of morphemes in English may be suffixed to nouns, verbs, and adjectives to form new nouns:

educate - educator, education
work - worker
lazy - laziness
cup - cupful
fire - fireman
advance - advancement
solid - solidity
divorce - divorcée
father - fatherhood
marksman - marksmanship
king - kingdom

In some cases there are vowel shifts:

serene - serenity /i - ɪ/
profane - profanity /e - æ/

English derivation is primarily suffixation, which operates on all four word-classes. Arabic derivation occurs rarely

through suffixation. Normally a vowel change, or a vowel change plus affixes, is used.

1) Nouns derived from verbs use vowel change plus affixes:

ḥaḍḍar (to prepare) → taḥḍīr (preparation)

2) Nouns derived from adjectives use a vowel change:

jamīl (pretty) → jamāl (beauty)

3) There are only two nominalizing suffixes in Arabic:

-iyy : nationality (gentilic)
-jiyy: owner (professional activity)

These are applied to nouns:

maṣr (Egypt) → maṣriyy (Egyptian) qahwa (coffeehouse) → qahwajiyy (coffeehouse owner)

The major problem Arabic speakers have in learning English derived nouns is learning which suffixes can be used with each word. Essentially, each noun must be learned as a separate item. In cases where a vowel shift occurs:

seréne - serénity /i - I/

Arabic speakers will often keep the unshifted form:

serene - serenity /i - i/, */sərínəti/

5.5. The -ate Suffix

The suffix -ate comes from Latin, and is used to form nouns, verbs, and adjectives:

noun: He's a degenerate. /dədʒɛ́nərət/
verb; He degenerated. /dIdʒɛ́nəretId/
adjective: He's very degenerate. /dədʒɛ́nərət/

Note that the suffix vowel length depends on the part of speech. Arabic speakers will normally give all forms the same pronunciation:

degeneráte /dɛdʒɛnərét/

5.6. Variations in Derivational Morphemes

Certain derivation morphemes have different forms:

able - ible	drinkable - divisible
ent - ant	emergent - claimant
ence - ance	reverence - reluctance
ency - ancy	efficiency - buoyancy

These constitute spelling problems for Arabic speakers.

5.7. The Feminine Morphemes

Arabic words obligatorily indicate gender (verbs as well as nouns, adjectives, and pronouns). English is inconsistent and irregular in expressing this feature, and the Arabic speaker will be confused by the arbitrariness of English feminine morphemes:

actor - actress
suffragist - suffragette
comedian - commedienne
executor - executrix
buck - doe

5.8. Noun-Forming Morphemes From Verbs

Some verbs are made nouns by the agent suffix /er/:

cut - cutter
work - worker
fight - fighter

A single analogous construction does not exist in Arabic. Several alternatives are available:

1) It's a grass cutter. (lawn mower)

ʔinnaha	makina	li	qaṭʕ	ʔal-	haʃāʔiʃ
indeed she	machine	for	cutting	the	grass

Here a verbal noun for-the-cutting-of paraphrases the English.

2) He's a soccer player.

huwa	lāʕib	kurat	qadam
he	player	ball	foot

Here an active participle (lāʕib) is used as an agent noun.

3) He's a fire fighter.

huwa	rajul	Ø	yukāfiḥ	ʔal-	alnīrān
he	man	who	fights	the	fires

Here a present tense (habitual) verb is used to indicate action over a period of time.

Though Arabic has no exact equivalent, /-er/ suffixation is not difficult to learn, since it is quite regular. In common speech, however, Arabs are likely to use a translation from Arabic:

He's a player of soccer.

5.9. Diminutives

English forms diminutives in a number of ways:

John - Johnny
lamb - lambkin
goose - gosling
brook - brooklet
cigar - cigarette

Arabic is quite regular in forming diminutives. The vowel of the first syllable of a word becomes /u/; that of the second syllable becomes the diphthong /ay/.

nahr	- nuhayr	walad	- wulayd
river	small river	boy	- little boy

English is not regular in this respect, and Arabic speakers have trouble choosing proper diminutive suffixes.

5.10. Possessive Forms

Possessive forms usually refer to animate beings:

the girl's book
a man's shirt

Inanimate things usually follow of:

the beginning of the week
the roof of the church

Arabic uses the same construction in both cases:

the girl's		book	the roof	of the	church
kitāb	?al-	fatāh	saqf	?al-	kanīsa
book	the	girl	roof	the	church

Consequently Arabic speakers have difficulty choosing the appropriate form in English.

5.11. Determiners

Determiners constitute an extremely complex problem for students of any language. They are difficult for Arabic speakers, since Arabic determiners are structured quite differently.

Both English and Arabic have two sets of determiners, commonly referred to as definite and indefinite articles. In some respects they are comparable, in others, they are different.

5.11.1. Proper names in English are capitalized, since they are unique. Usually they have no determiners:

Albert Schweizer
Sunday
Omaha

When a determiner occurs there is a historical or grammatical reason for it. For instance, in the Azores, the helps specify

which islands. Similarly, in the Japanese, the word people has been deleted.

There are no capital letters in Arabic script. Names of unique persons, places, or things follow the same rules for determiners as all other nouns. Consequently Arabic speakers are prone to use determiners inappropriately with proper nouns in English:

the Christmas
the Sunday

5.11.2. Indefinite Determiners

	English	Arabic
indefinite	a, stressed some	Ø
nondefinite	a, Ø, unstressed some	Ø, ʔal

The English indefinite article is used in indefinite references to an item or person not previously mentioned, and not unique in the context:

This is a book.
Some men just never work hard.

Non-definite articles may be singular or plural. They refer to any non-unique item of a class:

He is a philosopher.
A stitch in time saves nine.
He has (Ø) books, (Ø) papers, and (Ø) pencils in his desk.
Some boys were throwing (Ø) stones here yesterday.

In Arabic the indefinite article is Ø:

This is a book.
hāðā | kitāb
this | book

The singular non-definite article is also Ø:

He is a philosopher.
huwa | faylasūf
he | philosopher

The plural non-definite article is /ʔal/:

I like apples
ʔuḥibb | ʔal- tuffāḥ
I like | the apples

Arabic speakers have a number of problems, then, with a, Ø, and some in English:

1) Learning to use a. Arabic speakers are generally likely to omit it:

*He is teacher.

The Arabic speaker must also learn to use an before vowels:

*a orange.

2) Learning to use Ø with non-definite plurals:

I like apples.

Here the Arabic-speaking student will usually insert the, which is often equivalent to Arabic /ʔal/:

*I like the apples. (in general)

3) Arabic speakers will generally not distinguish between stressed and unstressed some, since Arabic puts stress on most sentence words.

5.11.3. Anaphoric and Generic Articles

Anaphoric technically means referred back. Thus the term refers to a relationship between someone or something already in the field of focus, and a grammatical word. This may be an item or person already mentioned or an item unique in the culture. The is the anaphoric article in English:

The horses are here.
(Which horses have already been specified.)

Generic refers to class, group, or kind. The generic article in English is the:

The horse is a useful animal. (most horses)

Arabic uses the article /ʔal/ in both of the above situations, and the Arabic speaker will have little difficulty with the English article here. There are, however, several areas of conflict:

1) English does not use the with abstract nouns:

Love is immortal.

or with plural generic nouns:

Dogs are useful to man.

Arabic uses the article in both of these situations:

Love is immortal.
ʔal- ḥubb xālid
the love immortal

Dogs are useful to man.

?al- kilāb	mufīda	li	?al- ?insān
the dogs	are useful	to	the man

Arabic speakers will generally insert the in these situations in English:

*The love is immortal.
*The dogs are useful to man.

5.11.4. Compound Noun Phrase

When two nouns are joined with and, and are thought of as a unit, a single determiner is used in English:

Put the bread and butter on the table.

The article is repeated in Arabic:

The house and car

?al- bayt	wa- ?al- sayyārat
the house	and the car

There are two sources of error for the Arabic student in this situation:

1) The student will normally insert the article before the second noun:

*The house and the car...

2) The student will interpret the single determiner sequence (the father and mother) as definite noun plus indefinite noun:

*The father and a mother...

3) In English, a prepositional phrase with an object of place unique in the cultural context does not use the article:

in town	in school
at home	at college
to heaven	from work

Arabic equivalents always use the article. Consequently, Arabic speakers will insert the article in English:

*to the town
*at the home

5.11.5. Mass Nouns

In English the article does not occur with mass nouns:

water	anthropology
sand	love
light	facism

replacement	persistence
democracy	hydration

Abstract and mass nouns normally take the article prefix in Arabic:

Milk is nutritious.
ʔal- ḥalīb | muɣaððī
the milk | nutritious

An Arabic speaker will make such mistakes in English as:

*I heard a good news.
*He gave an information.

Several words are classified as mass in English and count in Arabic:

advice
news
information

To make a noun singular in English it is necessary to use a counter, such as piece, bar, grain, bit, etc. In Arabic these are normally singular and can be pluralized:

a bit of advice	bits of advice
naṣīḥa	naṣāʔiḥ

An Arabic speaker will often pluralize these nouns in English:

*The advices he gave were helpful.
*These news are good.

A number of nouns in English can be count or mass, depending on the context:

Mother buttered the toast. (mass)
He made a toast. (count)

Give me some paper. (mass)
He bought a (news) paper. (count)

These words are extremely confusing to Arabic speakers.

5.11.6. Cardinals and Ordinals

1) Cardinal numbers are more complicated in Arabic than in English. In general, because of gender, case, and word order considerations, they are more difficult for the English speaker learning Arabic than vice-versa. However, there do remain several problems.

a) One and two always follow the noun in Arabic. This leads to such mistakes as:

*I want book one.
*I want the book the one.

The Arabic singular noun often includes the force of "one", so that /kitāb/ may be translated as either a book or one book; Arabs will tend to confuse these two expressions in English.

b) Definiteness is similar in both languages:

I saw the five books which you bought.
ra?ayt | ?al- xamsa | kutub | ?allatī | ?iʃtaraytuhā
I saw | the five | books | which | you bought it

This causes no problems for the Arabic student. Otherwise, however, the Arabic cardinal may follow the noun:

The five teachers were killed.
?al- mudarrisūn | ?al- xams | qutilū
the teachers | the five | were killed

The Arabic student will often use this order:

*The teachers five were killed.

c) Numbers from three to ten in Arabic have plural noun heads, as in English:

five books
xamsat | kutub
five | books

Here Arabic speakers have no problems. However, numbers from 11 up have singular noun heads in Arabic:

one hundred books
mi?at | kitāb
one hundred | book

Arabic speakers, then, will often use singular noun heads in English also:

*eleven book
*twenty book
*thousand book

d) Whole cardinal numbers in Arabic: 40, 300, 800, 3,000, 4,000,000 are plural, with a singular noun head. This leads to such mistakes in English as:

*five thousands book
*five millions dollar.

2) Ordinals up to tenth may be preposed in Arabic:

the first boy
?awwal | walad
first | boy

When the ordinal precedes, the article is not used in Arabic. Consequently, the Arabic speaker may often forget it in English:

*He was first person here.

From eleventh upward the ordinal must follow the noun in Arabic. In this construction the article is used with both noun and number:

the twelfth girl	
ʔal- bint	ʔal- θāniyaʕaʃar
the girl	the twelfth

The Arabic speaker will often transfer this to English:

*the time the fifteenth

5.11.7. Pre-articles

Pre-articles in English are of five types: partitives, emphatics, intensifiers, limiters, and fractions.

1) Emphatics, intensifiers, and limiters:

pre-article emphatics	just	almost		
	quite			
post-article emphatics	mere	utter		
	sheer	real		
intensifiers	all	entire	each	same
	whole	both	every	
limiters	even	merely		
	only			

a) These pre-articles are in general similarly defined in both languages. The problems are mainly lexical: in some cases Arabic meanings do not correspond to English. For example, the Arabic /kull/ has the meanings all, whole, every, each depending on the number and definiteness of the following noun. In English, whole must follow the definite article:

the whole day

while in Arabic it is a pre-article:

kull	ʔal- yawm
whole	the day

The Arabic speaker may transfer this to English:

*whole the day
*whole the days
*whole the three days

b) /kilā/ both in Arabic can occur only with dual nouns or pronouns:

both	men		both	of	us
kilā	?al-	rajulayn	kilānā		
both	the	men	both	us	

Both plus noun: both men, which has an exact Arabic equivalent, will not be a problem for Arabic speakers. Both plus pronoun requires the insertion of of: both of us. This is a problem for Arabic speakers, who will tend to forget the inserted of:

*both us

Arabic has no equivalent for noun plus noun. Consequently, such constructions as:

both John and Peter
both him and me

constitute a problem for Arabic speakers.

2) Fractions

Fractions in both languages make reference to a definite quantity or number. They can precede either a plural count or mass noun:

half	the	books	half	the	coffee
niṣf	?al-	kutub	niṣf	?al-	qahwa
half	the	books	half	the	coffee

In English all fractions except 1/2 require either the indefinite article a or a cardinal number before the fraction, and an inserted of following:

a fifth of the books
one fifth of the books

If the cardinal number is more than one, the fraction is plural:

four fifths of the books

In Arabic, however, all fractions share the distributional features of 1/2:

/niṣf ?al- kutub/	/rubʕ ?al- kutub/
means	means
half the books	fourth the books
and half of the books	and fourth of the books
and a half of the books	and a fourth of the books
and one half of the books	and one fourth of the books

Arabic speakers will tend to follow Arabic rules for fractions, producing such mistakes as:

*third the boys

When the cardinal preceding the fraction is two, Arabic uses the dual form:

two thirds of a cup
θulθayn | ʔal- finjān
two third | the cup

Consequently, an Arabic speaker will use singular in English in this situation:

*two third of a cup

3) Partitives

Partitives designate indefinite amounts and quantitites. In both languages they precede the noun head.

English has a number of doublets:

some	some of
much	much of
many	many of
a few	a few of
all	all of
several	several of

Those in the first column indicate simply an indefinite amount. Those in the second column indicate a portion of a particular quantity. Arabic does not make this distinction. Partitive in Arabic indicates a portion of the whole class in all constructions. Thus the English:

a few apples
and a few of the apples

have the same translation in Arabic:

(ʕadad) | qalīl | min | ʔal- tuffāḥ
(number) | few | from | the apples

Since Arabic is very different from English in this respect, Arabic speakers have major difficulty understanding these constructions in English.

The following Arabic terms:

kaθīr min	many, a lot of, much
qalīl min	a few, a little
ʔaɣlabiyya	most, a majority of
muʕẓam	most of
baʕḍ	some of

can occur with both non-count and plural count nouns. The article prefix is used in all cases:

a lot of books				a lot of coffee			
kaθīr	min	ʔal-	kutub	kaθīr	min	ʔal-	qahwa
a lot	from	the	books	a lot	from	the	coffee

There are, then, four separate types of errors made by Arabs in learning almost all English partitives:

a) Improper usage of terms with count or non-count nouns:

*a few coffee
*much man

b) Improper insertion of the definite article:

*many the men
*many the coffee

c) Improper deletion of the preposition of:

*most my friends

d) Arabic speakers do not understand the distinction between a simple indefinite amount and a portion of a quantity as it is made in English. They will make the above types of errors in either case. For example, *some the coffee will be produced for either some coffee or some of the coffee.

5.11.8. Demonstratives

English distinguishes between 'near me or us' and 'elsewhere':

1st person	2nd and 3rd person
this	that
these	those

Arabic distinguishes between 'near me/us and/or you' and 'elsewhere':

1st and 2nd person	3rd person
hāðā	ðālik

Arabic speakers, then, quite often use this and that incorrectly:

*That dress I have on is too long.
*That's a fine party we're giving.
*This is a pretty hat you have on.

5.11.9. Adjectives

Base adjective in English are those which contain no derivational suffixes:

tall	happy	young
hot	ugly	nice

Derived adjectives are those which come from other parts of speech.

Adjectives are derived from nouns by the use of suffixes:

ful	hopeful	ic	angelic
ous	joyous	ly	costly
ish	childish	ary	elementary
y	faulty	ory	preparatory
al	fatal	ular	spectacular
like	childlike	an	American
ed	dog-eared	ive	prohibitive

Adjectives derived from verbs are called participles. Participles are derived from the active form of the verb:

1) Present participle: verb plus {-ing}:

the sleeping baby

2) Past participle: verb plus {-en / -ed}:

the broken door
the baked beans

5.11.10. Arabic Adjectives

Arabic adjective structure is very different from English. All adjectives are derived from verbs, following the rules of the base form: FaMĪL. This means that such adjectives have the vowels /a/ and /ī/, and any three consonants. Thus the adjective jamīla '(she) beautiful' is derived from the verb jamulat 'she became beautiful'.

Adjectives derived from "hollow" verbs are irregular and have only two consonants. Adjectives derived by suffixation, as in English, are extremely rare. They are called /nisba/ relative adjective and occur e.g. with nationalities. They are formed by suffixing /-ī/ to a noun:

miṣrī	from	miṣr
Egyptian		Egypt

Certain Arabic adjectives formed in this way have come into English:

Iraqi
Beiruti
Kuwaiti

5.11.11. Except for participles, Arabic speakers have relatively little difficulty with adjective classes in English, other than the normal problems involved in leaving individual lexical items. Participles, however, are a major stumbling block for Arabic speakers.

Whether the English participle is present (-ing) or past (ed) depends on the type of sentence from which it was derived:

1) -ing results when the noun head was the subject of an active, transitive or intransitive sentence:

The book amused me. ⟶ the amusing book
The boy is running. ⟶ the running boy

2) -ed results when the noun head was the subject of a passive sentence:

The shoes were polished. ⟶ the polished shoes
The pepper was stuffed. ⟶ the stuffed pepper

3) Participles derived from intransitive verbs have as their origin a relative clause. These take -ing:

the boy who was sighing ⟶ the sighing boy
my brother who was screaming ⟶ my screaming brother

4) A small group of intranstives, which show changing status, take -ed:

fallen angel
vanished race

5.11.12. Participial word order in English is extremely complicated. A few very general rules may be stated.
1) In general participles precede the noun head.
2) If a complement to the participle is required, the participle must follow the noun:

*the lying baby
The baby lying...

3) If the participle has an optional complement, both participle and complement must follow the noun head:

*the stuffed with rice pepper
the pepper stuffed with rice

4) Participles which precede the noun are restrictive, that is, they point out the noun they modify as unique in that respect. Thus, my screaming brother describes one particular brother, as opposed, perhaps, to other brothers who do not scream.
5) Participles which follow the noun are not restrictive, except for those subject to rules 2) and 3), which have complements to the participle itself. All others are derived from optional and clauses and relative clauses. Thus:

When you see the light blinking, turn left.

is derived from:

When you see the light, and it is blinking, turn left.

5.11.13. Arabic has both active and passive participles. Active participles are derived from transitive and intransitive verbs. Passive participles are derived only from transitive verbs.

Participles in Arabic have much freer usage in Arabic than in English. Any participle can be used to modify a noun. When modifying nouns, they behave like ordinary adjectives, following the noun and showing agreement with it in gender, number, and definiteness:

a wounded man		the wounded men	
rajul	majrūḥ	ʔal- rijāl	ʔal- majrūḥūn
man	wounded	the men	the wounded

The basic meaning of the active participle is: performing the action indicated by the verb. A noun modified by an active participle is equivalent to a noun modified by an adjectival clause containing the corresponding active verb, where the subject is the same as the modified noun:

the laughing boy	
ʔal- walad	ʔal- ḍāḥik
the boy	the laughing

the boy who is laughing		
ʔal- walad	ʔallaði	yaḍḥak
the boy	that	laughs

The Arabic active participle is more or less equivalent to the English -ing form derived from verbs in active sentences.

5.11.14. The basic meaning of the passive participle is: undergoing or having undergone the action indicated by the verb. A noun modified by a passive participle is equivalent to a noun modified by a clause containing the corresponding passive verb where the subject is the same as the modified noun:

the published article	
ʔal- maqāla	ʔal- manʃūra
the article	the published

the article which was published		
ʔal- maqāla	ʔallatī	nuʃirat
the article	which	she was published

The Arabic passive participle is more or less equivalent to the English past participle derived from verbs in passive constructions.

5.11.15. Arabic participles emphasize the action of the verb to a much greater degree than English participles do. This is illustrated by the fact that in Arabic, a noun plus participle construction can stand alone as a completed sentence:

?al- walad | ?al- ḍāḥik
the boy | the laughing

This construction means, roughly: *The boy he is the one who is laughing. To be a complete sentence, the noun-participle construction remains a phrase. Arabic speakers have major difficulty interpreting English participles modified by the. Since the Arabic equivalent is a full sentence in Arabic, English participles are interpreted as full sentences also. Thus a phrase like the cooking class would be interpreted as 'The class is cooking something at the present moment.' It is difficult to predict what meaning would be attached to:

cooking utensils
laughing matter
reading material
etc.

5.11.16. Arabic speakers will equate English past participles with passive particles in Arabic. However the Arabic passive participle cannot be formed with intransitive verbs. Consequently, the Arabic speaker will have difficulty with such English phrases as:

vanished race
decayed leaves
excaped convict

which are formed from intransitive verbs. The Arabic speaker will interpret these as full sentences, verb plus subject constructions:

The race vanished.
The leaves decayed.
The convict escaped.

5.11.17. Word order in both languages is determined by the derivational history of the participles. In this respect, Arabic is much simpler than English. All participles are derived from a clause modifying the noun, and all occur following the noun. English participles are derived from several sources, and word order is determined by derivational source, type of verb, and the fact of its being restrictive or non-restrictive. This is extremely confusing to the Arabic speaker, who has a major problem in trying to learn proper word order. Several types of errors will be made:

1) He will place all participles after the noun, as is done in Arabic.

2) He will place all participles before the noun. This will happen as a hyperformation when he learns that many English participles do occur in this position.

3) He will place certain participles before, others after the noun. Often, however, he will make the wrong choices:

sitting girl
going man
race vanished
leaves decayed

4) The distinction between restrictive and non-restrictive usage will remain an extremely difficult concept for the Arabic speaker to grasp. He will seldom make word order distinctions on this basis. Consequently he might make such errors as:

the boy laughing
the girl running

5) The participle with a complement must follow the noun in English. The Arabic speaker is unfamiliar with this type of rule, and will often make such mistakes as:

*the cooking girl in the kitchen
*the walking children in the street

5.11.18. Participles in Arabic have perfective aspect. They thus describe action that has taken place in a period of time up to and including the present. Thus to express completed action the Arabic speaker will produce such forms as:

*the hearing boy
*studying student
*discovering man

Participles of verbs of going and remaining do not share this aspectual meaning. Consequently, terms such as running water have the same aspectual meaning in both languages. The only problem with participles of these verbs lies in the fact that in English many of them require complements and must follow the noun:

the baby lying in the bed

The Arabic speaker will often use these inappropriately:

*the lying baby

5.11.19. The Comparison of Adjectives
1) In English, comparison is shown in two ways:

One-syllable adjectives and those ending in /i/ receive the suffixes /er/ and /est/:

tall		silly
taller	comparative	sillier
tallest	superlative	silliest

All other adjectives are preceded by comparative words:

	beautiful
comparative	more beautiful
superlative	most beautiful

	beautiful
	less beautiful
	least beautiful

2) Arabic shows comparison by internal phonetic changes in the adjective. The adjective in comparison follows the form ?aFMaL where:

F = the first of three radicals
M = the middle of three radicals
L = the last of three radicals

thus:

/kabīr/ big becomes /?akbar/ bigger.

If the adjective cannot undergo internal change,

/?akθar/ more
/?aʃadd/ stronger
/?aqall/ less

may be used. Word order is not rigid, and these terms may either precede or follow the adjective:

more interested	
muhtamm	?akθar
interested	more

Superlative is shown in Arabic by making the comparative definite.

By prefixing the article /?al/ the:

less intelligent	
?aqall	ðakā?
less	(as to) intelligence

the least intelligent		
?al-	?aqall	ðakā?
the	least	(as to) intelligence

By adding a pronoun suffix:

taller	tallest
?aṭwal	?aṭwalhum
taller	the tallest of them

By a genitive construct:

the tallest of the students	
?aṭwal	?al- ṭullāb
tallest	of the students

Arabic speakers, then, have several problems in learning comparative constructions:

a) The rules determining the use of the suffixes /er/ and /est/ and the comparative words more, most, less, and least are not clear to the Arabic speaker. There is some interference occurring when Arabic adjectives which require a comparative word have as English equivalents adjectives requiring the English suffix.

b) The superlative in Arabic is simply the comparative made definite, whereas in English the superlative has a separate form. The learning of the superlative form in English is subject to the difficulties described above, i.e.--choosing between the suffix /est/ and the comparative words most or least.

Interference caused by the Arabic pattern for forming the superlative occurs when the student is learning the definite comparative form in English, as:

the taller of the students

The Arabic comparative is always indefinite, and since the superlative is formed by making the comparative definite, the Arabic student will interpret the above type of construction as superlative.

c) When comparing adjectives with different referents, both languages use a connecting word to introduce the second term:

Peter	ʔaṭwal	min	yuḥannā
Peter	taller	from	John

The Arabic word /min/ is most often translated into English as from. Consequently, Arabic speakers will often use from in this situation:

*Peter is taller from John.

d) When comparing adjectives with similar referents, English can use a simple possessive as the second term:

My brother is taller than yours.

Since in Arabic possession is shown by a noun suffix, the full noun phrase must be used as the second term:

ʔaxī	ʔakbar	min	ʔaxīk
my brother	bigger	from	your brother

The Arabic speaker, then, must learn to delete the noun when speaking English.

e) In English, when a demonstrative is the second term of a comparison, it is normally followed by the pronominal one:

This board is smoother than that one.

hāðihi	ʔal-	lawḥa	ʔamlas	min	tilk
this	the	board	smoother	from	that

The Arabic speaker, then, must learn to use the pronominal one in English.

f) Both languages have intensifiers which can accompany the comparative form of the adjective. Examples of English intensifiers are:

much	still
a little	somewhat
a lot	a great deal
lots	slightly
even	quite a bit

There are several Arabic intensifiers. These do not necessarily correspond to the English in meaning.

Word order is rigid in English. All intensifiers must occur before the comparative. While word order is not rigid in Arabic, this is not a problem since all intensifiers can occur before the comparative.

3) The most usual kind of noun phrase modification is the adjective-noun construction. This construction is derived through transformation from a simple sentence:

The man was old. ⟶ The old man

A double base transformation consists of such a sentence combined with another sentence:

Insert:	The man was old. +
Base:	The man was my uncle. ⟶
Transformation:	The old man was my uncle.

English requires that the adjective precede the noun which it modifies.

Arabic transformations for simple adjective modification follow essentially the same form:

ʔal-	rajul	kān	ʕajūz
the	man	was	old

+

ʔal-	rajul	kān	xālī
the	man	was	my uncle

⟶

ʔal-	rajul	ʔal-	ʕajūz	kān	xālī
the	man	the	old	was	my uncle

Arabic differs from English on two points in this construction:

1. The Arabic adjective normally follows the noun.
2. If the noun-head has the determiner /ʔal/, the adjective also has the determiner in Arabic.

Both of these items may cause interference for the Arabic student learning English, who must learn that the adjective normally precedes the noun and is not modified by a determiner.

4) The transformation which deletes the realtive pronoun and the verb may leave either a simple adjective or a complex modifier:

The boy who is sick ⟶ The sick boy
The servant who works part-time ⟶ the part-time servant
The boy who is talking to him ⟶ the boy talking to him

Here the simple modifier shifts to a position preceding the noun, while the complex modifier remains following the noun.

Relative words are not deleted in Arabic. Consequently, both the English base:

The boy who is talking to the sergeant

and the transformation:

The boy talking to the sergeant

have a single translation in Arabic:

ʔal-	ṣabiyy	ʔallaði	yatakallam	maʕa	ʔal-	jarrāḥ
the	boy	who	he speaks	with	the	sargent

The basic problem for Arabic speakers in this case lies in learning to recognize complex modifiers as an exception to the basic rule that modifiers must precede the noun in English.

5) In English, from a verb phrase consisting of a transitive verb plus a noun phrase, we can derive a compound modifier. The verb phrase passes through several transformations:

The animal drinks milk + relative transformation ⟶
The animal which drinks milk + deletion transformation ⟶
The animal drinking milk + noun modifier transformation ⟶
The milk drinking animal.

Arabic cannot undergo this type of transformation. Thus compound adjectives do not occur. However, in learning English, the Arabic speaker interprets compound adjectives no differently than ordinary adjectives, and has no problems learning them beyond normal semantic difficulties.

5.11.20. Relative Clauses

1) Relative clauses enable sentences to modify nouns which

are part of larger sentences. Thus:

I saw a man +
You were talking to the man ⟶
I saw the man to whom you were talking.

In English, relative clauses begin with who, whom, which, or that. The relative word is an integral part of the clause, functioning as subject, direct or indirect object, or preprepositional object, as well as providing the reference linking clause with noun-head. For example:

I saw the man who went to the moon. (Who = clause subject)

I saw the UFO that John reported. (That = clause object)

This is the friend to whom I owe seven dollars. (Whom = clause indirect object)

In Arabic the relative is a separate form which does not participate in either clause, but simply links them together. Consequently, the Arabic relative clause must contain a separate referent to the noun-head within the clause. This is normally a pronoun:

I saw the man whom you were talking to.

ra?ayt	?al- rajul	?allaðī	kunta	tatakallam	maʕahu
I saw	the man	who	you were	you talk	with him

The above illustration has, as is typical, both a relative /?allaðī/ who, and a pronoun referent, in /maʕahu/ with him.

This particular facet of Arabic grammar causes a great deal of interference for the Arabic student learning English. There is somewhat less difficulty when the relative is in subject position, although mistakes such as *This is the man who he came are common. Relative words in object positions are much more difficult for Arabic students to master. Mistakes such as:

*This is the man who I saw him.
*This is the man who I talked to him.

are very frequent even for advanced students who speak otherwise fluent English.

Another problem for Arabic speakers lies in the fact that the English relative words are declined for case: who (nominative), whose (genitive), and whom (accusative). The Arabic relative word is not declined (except in the dual, which is relatively rare). Arabic speakers have some difficulty mastering the English relative which has case distinctions, whereas case inflection is not a prominent feature of noun inflection in English.

The distinction between what and that is also confusing, since the Arabic equivalents do not correspond exactly in meaning and usage.

2) Both languages have conventions which allow the deletion of the realtive words. In English the relative word may be deleted when it occurs next to the noun it refers to, if it functions as a direct object within the relative clause. For example, which can be deleted in the following illustration:

These are the new stamps which he bought in France. ⟶
These are the new stamps he bought in France.

Which may not be deleted in the following illustration:

These are the new stams which came from France.
*These are the new stamps came from France.

Relatives which occupy subject position within the relative clause may not be deleted.

In Arabic the relative is obligatorily deleted after an indefinite antecedent, and retained after a definite antecedent:

With an indefinite antecedent:

new stamps that he brought from New York

ṭawābiʕ	jadīda	ʔiʃtarāhā	min	New York
stamps	new	he brought her	from	New York

With a definite antecedent:

those new stamps that he brought from New York

tilka	ʔal- ṭawābiʕ	ʔal- jadīda	ʔallatī	ʔiʃtarāhā	min	New York
that	the stamps	the new	which	he brought her	from	New York

The problem, then, for the Arabic student learning English lies in learning to delete the relative word after a definite antecedent. For example, the relative word in the following English sentence may be deleted, whereas in the Arabic equivalent it must be retained:

Those are the new stamps which he brought from New York.
Those are the new stamps _____ he brought from New York.

Arabic speakers are not likely to delete the relative word in this situation in English, but might wish to delete the relative after an indefinite antecedent:

*These are stamps they came from New York.

3) In English, when the relative word is an indirect object or an object of a preposition, the clause may show either of

two word orders.

a) The jail to which I sent George...
The girl to whom I gave the kitten...

b) The jail I sent George to...
The girl I gave the kitten to...

Because of the structure of the relative clause, Arabic does not allow this type of option. Only one word order is possible:

The jail to which I sent George...

?al- sijn	?allaðī	baʃaθt	George	?ilayhi
the jail	which	I sent	George	to it

Consequently, the Arabic student will have some difficulty mastering the different permutations which English allows in this construction.

4) Non-restrictive relative clauses in English are formed in exactly the same fashion as ordinary relative clauses. However, they do not serve as noun modifiers. Instead, they simply provide extra, parenthetical pieces of information:

My brother who works in the hospital in a doctor.

The above who works in the hospital is an ordinary (restrictive) relative clause, differentiating this particular brother from other brothers.

My brother, who works in the hospital, is a doctor.

This who works in the hospital is a non-restrictive relative clause. It simply gives information about the brother; it does not differentiate him from other brothers.

Non-restricted relative clauses are separated in writing by commas, and in speech by pauses.

The Arabic relative clause can likewise be restrictive or non-restrictive. However, normally neither verbal nor written punctuation is used to differentiate them. Consequently the Arabic speaker must master the concept of the non-restrictive clause in English, as well as the spoken and written clues which differentiate it.

5) Relative clauses can function as noun phrase subjects and objects in both languages:

Whichever you chose will please me.

?ayy	ʃay?	taxtāruhu	sayarḍīnī
which	thing	you choose it	it will please me

I know what he stole.

?aʃlam	māðā	saraq
I know	what	he stole

The relative words function similarly in both languages and consequently do not pose a grammatical problem for the Arabic student learning English.

6) A nominalization is a construction (not necessarily a relative construction) that becomes a noun phrase. Both languages allow nominalization to function as subjects and objects. When differences occur, they are due not to contrasts in the process of nominalization, but to differences in the structure of the nominalized sentence. For example, the nominalized clause in:

To milk the cows is easy.

and that in:

To have milked the cows was easy.

have identical translations in Arabic:

To milk the cows...		To have milked the cows...	
ḥalb	ʔal- baqar	ḥalb	ʔal- baqar
to milk	the cows	to milk	the cows

The difference here lies in the verbs, where Arabic does not have a present perfect infinitive in opposition to a plain infinitive. When problems with nominalizations occur, they are always of this type, that is, they are internal to the structure of the nominalized sentence.

7) In English sentences can be nominalized through the use of subordinators. The most common subordinator is that. Subordinate clauses are added to sentences as subjects or as objects:

I know that he came.
That you are the best student is what he said.

Subordinate clauses in Arabic are quite similar. However, there are several instances which may cause problems for the Arabic speaker:

a) Whenever the clause is the object of the verb in English, the word that can be deleted:

I want to know that he is successful.
I want to know he is successful.

The Arabic equivalent for that is not deleted:

ʔurīd	ʔan	ʔaʕlam	ʔannahu	nājiḥ
I want	that	I know	that he	successful

Arabic speakers may have difficulty deleting that in English.

b) Other subordinators are whether and if. Whether is sometimes accompanied by or not. Arabic has no opposition analogous to

whether/if; it must say either if or if...or not. Usage of whether is a problem for Arabic speakers.

c) When the clause is the subject of the verb in English, it follows the verb which then receives an impersonal "it" as subject:

It is necessary to know your name first.

Arabic clauses as subject also follow the verb, but, since Arabic lacks any impersonal pronoun, the Arab will tend to omit it in English:

*Is necessary to know your name.

8) Relative clauses with the verb have may form complex adjective phrases with the word with:

The man who has black hair ⟶
the man with black hair

The class which has a new teacher ⟶
the class with a new teacher

Arabic has a more or less analogous construction, if the object referred to is a physical characteristic or something worn:

The man who has black hair...			
ʔal- rajul	ʔallaðī	ʃaʕruhu	ʔaswad
the man	that (who)	hair his	black

The man with black hair...			
ʔal- rajul	ʔal- ʔaswad	ʔal- ʃaʕr	
the man	the black	the hair	(= black of hair)

However, if the object does not fit the above conditions, the construction must remain in the possessive form:

The class which has a new teacher...				
ʔal- faṣl	ʔallaðī	ladayhi	mudarris	jadīd
the class	that (which)	with it	teacher	new

Arabic students are not likely to use the with construction in English in this construction.

PART 6: VOCABULARY

6. Introduction

The previous units of this manual have described the phonological system and the syntactic structures of English as they contrast with those of Arabic, especially dwelling on those which cause problems for the Arabic-speaking student learning English. This final unit is concerned with the meaning and usage of individual words which are for some reason problematical for Arab students.

Arabic speakers have several types of problems in learning English words. These types are by no means mutually exclusive; some are quite closely related to each other. Moreover, problems in word usage are often related to differences in the syntactic constructions in both languages. Many problems of this type have been treated in the previous units; however, many others remain and are treated here.

Other types of problems are:

1. Words and phrases in English which have no equivalents in Arabic due to cultural differences. For example, English can say part time workers, while the Arabic equivalent is people who work few hours. There are hundreds of idiomatic phrases like this which can cause problems for Arabic speakers.

2. Grammatical words in English for which either Arabic has no equivalent, such as a and whether, or for which Arabic usage does not correspond with English. For example, Arabic speakers often use have incorrectly, such as in *your book is with me , which is a direct translation from the Arabic, rather than I have your book.

3. Words in English which have no Arabic equivalents, such as it, is.

4. Two or more words in English which correspond to only one word in Arabic, such as house-home, wish-hope, weather-climate, watch-clock hour, upstairs-upon-up in- above.

5. Words in English which correspond to two or more words in Arabic, such as please = min faḍlik, tafaḍḍal, law samaḥt, etc.

6. Prepositions. All prepositions cause problems for Arabic speakers, since Arabic has equivalents which do not correspond exactly in meaning and usage for all of them. Prepositions are always a major problem for a student of any foreign language.

7. Words which have totally different meanings in English by nature of differences in word order, e.g. just in

He's a just man. (= fair, impartial)
He just got here. (= only now)
He's just wonderful. (= absolutely, positively)

The sentence I can't explain it simply and I simply can't explain

it contain the same words but the meanings are quite different. Arabic speakers will tend to equate these sentences.

Alphabetical List of Problem Vocabulary Words

a (an)
Arabic has only a definite article /?al/ the; Arabic has no indefinite article.

a few
(See few.)

a little
(See little.)

above
(See up.)

accept
(See agree.)

across
Can be easily confused with cross. The difficulty is due to the similarity in pronunciation:

*I went cross the street.

affect (effect)
Arabic speakers are likely to confuse these two words due to the similarity of the pronunciation and spelling, and by the fact that they are both translated by a single word in Arabic.

*afraid from
(See afraid of, below.)

afraid of
Arabic speakers will substitute from for of:

*He is afraid from the dog.

after
Arabic speakers confuse after and afterwards. After is used with a phrase or clause:

...after the game...
After the movie had ended...

Afterwards is an adverb, and stands alone:

I have to study until 7 o'clock. Afterwards, I might watch T.V.

after midnight

Arabic speakers say:

*It is now two o'clock after midnight.

rather than:

It is now two o'clock in the morning.
or It is now 2 a.m.

*after tomorrow

(See day after tomorrow.)

afterwards

(See after.)

age

(See old + BE.)

ago

I saw him two days ago.

Arabic speakers substitute from or before:

*I saw him from two days.
*I saw him before two days.

(See also from, before.)

agree

He agreed to go with us.
He consented to go with us.

Arabic speakers might say:

*He accepted to go with us.

all day long

He studied all day long.

Arabic speakers say:

*He studied all the day.

*all my possible

An Arabic speaker might say:

*I did all my possible.

rather than I did my best. (See also *my possible.)

almost
This word is difficult for Arabic speakers to grasp in all its appropriate English usages.

alone
(See leave.)

along
This has no direct equivalent in Arabic. The Arabic speaker will tend to use phrases or other prepositions: He had his gun along would be used less than: He had his gun next to him or He had his gun close.

aloud
(See loud.)

already
This has no immediate equivalent in Arabic. The Arabic speaker has difficulty in learning to use it. He will likely use It's finished now before he will use It's finished already.

also vs. too
Arabic speakers have difficulty in learning the usage of also when contrasted with too. In English too cannot replace also in all its uses in the sentence. This might cause an Arabic speaker to say *He too came.

am, are
Is, am, and are do not exist in Arabic.

among
(See between.)

angry
Arabic speakers confuse angry, sorry, and sad.

angry with
Arabic speakers do not always use the correct preposition in this type of expression. They are likely to say *I am angry from him rather than I am angry with him.
(See also from.)

another
It is difficult to acquire and understand the proper use of another when it is contrasted with other.

any
Arabic speakers say:

*I have no any money.

rather than I have no money or I haven't any money.

arm

Arabic speakers have trouble distinguishing arm and hand. They may say I broke my arm when they mean I broke my hand. Arabic yad means both hand and arm.

army

Arabic speakers would be inclined to understand army as military, as military is the Arabic equivalent.

as

Both as and like have the same equivalent in Arabic. Arabic speakers therefore have difficulty in learning the proper usages of the English words. The same like is used for the same as.

as far as

As far as is used to indicate distance; until is used in reference to time. Arabic speakers often confuse these two:

He walked as far as the corner. ⟶
*He walked until the corner.

*He studied as far as 7 o'clock.

(See also until.)

at

It is difficult for the Arabic speaker to learn the proper use of this word, as it can be replaced in Arabic by the following prepositions: in, on, to, or a verbal nominal prepositional phrase.

This preposition is sometimes used to express proximity, and Arabic speakers often confuse it with on. They tend to say:

I'm sitting on the table.

when they mean that they sit on a chair, near the table, or:

The teacher stood on the blackboard.

when they mean that she stood near the blackboard. (See also on.)

When not indicating proximity, Arabic speakers confuse at with to. They say:

*I look to the picture.

rather than I look at the picture.

(See also to, first.)

away

(See throw.)

back

This word has more than one Arabic equivalent. (See return.)

BE

There is a verb to be in Arabic, but it has only past or future meaning; equivalents of is, am, are are lacking. An Arabic speaker will say:

*That what I want.

beat

(See win.)

be careful

Arabic speakers will say:

*Take care from that knife!

rather than Be careful of that knife!

become

(See begin.)

been

Auxiliaries are lacking in Arabic, so Arabic speakers find great difficulty in learning how to use them.

before

I saw him two days ago.

Arabic speakers will substitute before in this construction:

*I saw him before two days.

(See also ago.)

begin

Arabic speakers will say:

*It became to rain hard.

instead of It began to rain hard.

be kind

Arabic speakers say:

*He is always very gentle with me.

instead of He is always very kind to me.

below

(See down.)

BE + right

You are right.
He is wrong.

Arabic speakers use have in constructions such as this:

*You have right.
or *You have reason.
or *The right is with you.

(See also right, reason, have.)

BE + to me

Arabic speakers say:

*This pencil is to me or *This pencil is for me.

when they wish to indicate possession:

This pencil is mine.
This is my pencil.
This pencil belongs to me.

(See also my - mine - belong + to me.)

between

Arabic speakers confuse between and among.
(See also among.)

BE + with me

Arabic speakers use BE + with me where I have is meant:

*You book is with me.
(I have your book.)

This error is due to a direct translation of the Arabic equivalent.

big

Arabic speakers confuse big and old. Big refers to size; old refers to age; a single adjective is used in Arabic for both of these meanings. She is older than Mary becomes:

*She is bigger than Mary.

(See also old.)

bit (of)
This has many Arabic equivalents

bond
(See link.)

bookshop
A bookshop or bookstore sells books for money. A library lends books which must be returned. Both of these words are translated by the same word in Arabic.

break
This has many Arabic equivalents so that it is difficult for an Arabic speaker to learn all its possible usages.

bring
The Arabic speaker tends to confuse bring with take and get because some of the equivalents of these words tend to overlap with the Arabic equivalent.
(See also give birth.)

by
By has a direct equivalent in Arabic but it does not fit all the usages of the English word. For example, by is sometimes used in the meaning of French chez:

*I'll come by you at 3:00 this afternoon.

call
Arabic speakers say:

*How do you call that?
or *What do you name that?

rather than:

What do you call that?
or What is the name of that?

can
Confused with could.

catch
(See take hold of.)

ceiling
Arabic speakers have difficulty in distinguishing ceiling and roof.

celebration
(See festivity.)

ceremony
(See festivity.)

chalk
This is a non-count noun in English. In order to specify number, we must use a qualifier:

a bar of soap a bottle of ink

Arabic speakers often use non-count nouns incorrectly:

*We write with chalks.
*I have a soap.
*He bought an ink.

cheer
Arabic speakers confuse cheer and cheer up. To cheer a person, or cheer for him, is to shout for him because he has done something well, or because you want him to do better. We try to cheer up a person when he is sad or discouraged.

climate
(See weather.)

clock
Watch and clock are not easily distinguishable for Arabic speakers. The same Arabic word means not only watch and clock, but hour as well. A watch is worn on the wrist or carried in the pocket. A clock is put on a table or hung on the wall, and is larger than a watch.

close-cloth-clothes
These words are easily confused in pronunciation. Arabic speakers tend to pronounce θ (th) as z.

close
Arabic speakers use close where turn off is appropriate:

*I closed the radio.

conceited
(See see oneself.)

consent
(See agree.)

cook
In English the verb and noun are identical. The Arabic speaker would expect the noun to differ from the verb and would therefore abstain from using cook.

correct
Arabic speakers are confused in using correct and right:

He has correct manners.
not *He has right manners.

could
Confused with can.

course (in school)
Arabic speakers will tend to confuse and replace course with subject. Both words are identical in Arabic.

cut, cut off
Arabic speakers confuse cut and cut off. To cut means to mark with a knife, or to wound. To cut off means to separate completely.

day after tomorrow
Arabic speakers might say *after tomorrow:

*I am going to see him after tomorrow.

develop
(See practice.)

DO
If DO is used as an auxiliary in English, then it has no Arabic equivalent and the Arabic speaker tends to omit it. Arabic speakers also confuse DO and make, as in:

*I made my homework.

rather than I did my homework.
(See also make.)

DO + best
(See *all my possible, *my possible.)

down, down in, down on, downstairs
Arabic speakers confuse down with downstairs, down on, down in and below because Arabic has only one word /taḥt/ down to express all these meanings.
For directions on the map English uses up for north, down for south, back for east and out for west. The Arabic speaker tends to use down for all of these.

draw
This has many meanings that correspond to different words and phrases in Arabic.

dress
(See put on clothes.)

drown
Arabic speakers confuse sink and drown.
(See sink.)

each (every)
The difference between these two words in English is very subtle. The Arabic speaker will find great difficulty in learning when and when not to use each of them.

effect
(See affect.)

enjoy
Rather than:

I enjoyed myself at the picnic.
I enjoyed the picnic.

Arabic speakers say:

*I enjoyed my time very much.

enter
As with many other verbs of motion, Arabic-speaking students have a tendency to add a directional preposition in English:

*I entered to the building.

rather than I entered the building.

every
(See each.)

face, facing
Arabic speakers may say:

*In face of our house there is a shop.

rather than Facing our house there is a shop.
(Cf. opposite.)

far
(See from here.)

fast (quick)
Arabic speakers confuse the usages of these two English words.

festivity (ceremony) (celebration)
These three words are equivalent to one Arabic word.

fetch
This verb is troublesome to Arabic speakers because the Arabic word /fattiʃ ʕalā/ means to look for.

few
A few and few have to do with objects that can be counted,

such as books, pens, bananas. A few means some and is the opposite of none. When using a few, you are definitely calling attention to the fact that you have some. Few means a very small number and is the opposite of many. When using few you are calling attention to the fact that you haven't many. Most courses do not teach this difference.

fingers

Arabic speakers have trouble distinguishing fingers and toes, both of which are expressed by a single word in Arabic.

finish

He finished his work.

Arabic speakers add an unappropriate preposition in this type of construction:

*He finished from his work.

first

Arabic speakers confuse first and at first. First shows the order in which something happens. At first shows a condition or fact which may later change to the opposite.

fish

I go fishing.
I fish often.

Arabic speakers translate the Arabic, saying:

*I hunt fish.

floor

Arabic speakers have difficulty in distinguishing floor and ground, which are translated by the same Arabic word.

foot

(See leg.)

for

The Arabic /li/ introduces the indirect object and is equivalent to English to or for; it also denotes possession (belonging to), as well as purpose for: the Arabic speaker will tend to use for for all of these:

*He gave the book for you.

(See also BE + to me, wait for.)

for a long time

I haven't seen him for a long time.

Arabic speakers will say:

*I haven't seen him from a long time.
or *I haven't seen him since a long time.

foreigner
(See stranger.)

from
(See afraid of, ago, angry with, finish, for a long time, one of.)

from here
Arabic speakers say:

*Go from here.
*Pass from here.

rather than:

Go this way.
Pass this way.

In indicating distance in English, Arabic speakers may feel the necessity to use far when it is not appropriate:

*The museum is two miles far from here.

instead of The museum is two miles from here.

game
Arabic speakers confuse game, play, and toy. We play games like tennis, baseball, etc. A play is a story acted on a stage by several players or actors. A toy is a plaything, usually to amuse children.

gentle
(See be kind.)

get

I got good grades in history.

Arabic speakers sometimes say:

*I took good grades in history.

get in, get off, get on, get out of
Arabic speakers confuse these words.

get on well

I am getting on well at school.

The verb get is used in many idioms in English and is often difficult for Arabic speakers. They usually want to substitute other verbs:

*I am going on well at school.

get permission

I got permission from my teacher.

Arabic speakers substitute take:

*I took a permission from my teacher.

give

Arabic speakers confuse give and offer. When you offer a person something, you want him to take it, but he has a choice. You don't know if he will take it or not. When you give someone something it means he has taken it.

give birth

His wife gave birth to a baby girl.

Arabic speakers might say:

*His wife brought a baby girl.

go

Arabic speakers will substitute the verb travel, even when talking about short distances:

He traveled to the bank this morning.

instead of He went to the bank this morning. Go may be used for either short or long distances; but travel is used only for long distances.
(See also walk.)

go for a walk

I went for a walk.

Arabic speakers might say:

*I made a walk
or *I went a walk.

(Cf. take a walk.)

going (on)
(See get on well.)

go to bed, go to sleep
(See lie down.)

gold, golden
Arabic speakers confuse gold and golden, and might say:

*I have a golden watch.

instead of I have a gold watch.

ground
(See floor.)

hail vs. sleet
Most Arabs have never seen sleet or hail and will confuse the two.

half past
Arabic speakers often say:

*It is six and a half.

rather than It is half past six, as this is a direct translation of the Arabic equivalent.

hand
(See arm.)

*happy from
(See pleased with.)

hard, hardly
On the analogy of other English adverbs, Arabic speakers often say:

*He studies hardly.

have
Have as a verb is pronounced differently from have to as an auxiliary:

He has a new car.	/hæz/
He has to write a paper.	/hæstə/
They have two books.	/hæv/
They have to borrow some money.	/hæftə/

Arabic speakers will consistently misunderstand and mispro-

nounce these.

have (has) (had)
As auxiliaries, these have no equivalent in Arabic.

have
(See also BE + with me, old + BE, BE + right.)

high
(See loud.)

hold
(See take hold of.)

hope
(See wish.)

hour (time)
The Arabic speaker will confuse hour and time. If he is asking for the time of day, he will say *What is the hour?

how
(See call, know how + infinitive.)

how + like
Arabic speakers might say:

*How do you see the movie?

instead of How do you like the movie.

how much + cost
Arabic speakers might say:

*How much is its price?

rather than How much does it cost? or What is the price of it.

hunt
(See fish.)

in

I walked home in the rain.

Arabic speakers might substitute under:

*I walked home under the rain.

(See also (the) next day.)

in the morning - a.m.
(See after midnight.)

information
This is always a singular count noun in English. But Arabic speakers might attempt to make it plural:*informations.

ink
This is a non-count noun in English. In order to specify number, we must use a qualifier:

a piece of chalk, a bar of soap

Arabic speakers often use non-count nouns incorrectly:

*He bought an ink.
*I have a soap.
*We write with chalks.

(Cf. chalk.)

is
(See BE.)

it
Arabic has no neuter gender pronouns using he or she instead.

kind
(See mark.)

know
English and Arabic present tense of know are the same in usage, but Arabic past tense is best translated as came to know, learned, found out. Arabic speakers will say know:

*I knew now that you were here.

instead of I just found out that you were here.

know how to + infinitive
Arabic speakers omit how from these constructions:

*Do you know to play chess?

last night
Arabic speakers will say *yesterday night.

laugh at
Arabic speakers substitute the incorrect preposition on:

*He was laughing on me.

learn

Arabic speakers confuse study and learn.
(See also know.)

leather
Arabic speakers confuse skin and leather.

leave
Arabic speakers confuse leave, let go, and leave alone. We leave someone when we go away from him, and he stays behind. We let go of something or someone we have hold of. To leave something or someone alone is to stop troubling them, to stop touching them.

leave for
Arabic speakers substitute the directional preposition to:

*He left to England yesterday.

leg
Arabic speakers have trouble distinguishing leg and foot.

let go
(See leave.)

library
(See bookshop.)

lie down
Arabic speakers confuse (to) lie down, (to) go to bed, and (to) go to sleep.

like
Love and like are the same word in Arabic.
Arabic speakers confuse like, want, and would like. Like is used to express fondness for something and is a state which is true all of the time, e.g.: I like coffee. Want and would like are used when requesting or offering something, e.g.: I want a cup of coffee, Would you like some coffee? for this last sentence, the Arabic speaker will say:

*Do you like some coffee?

like + gerund of sport
On the analogy of to play tennis/baseball/football, etc., the Arabic speaker is likely to make such errors as:

*I like to play ski, roller skate, etc.

link (tie) (bond)
Arabic speakers are likely to confuse these three words, as all three are translated by the same Arabic word.

little

A little and little have to do with objects which cannot be counted, such as chalk, ink, soap, milk. A little means some, and is the opposite of none. Little means a small amount and is the opposite of much. A little emphasizes what we don't have.
(See also small.)

long
(See tall.)

look at
The Arabic speaker may say:

*See the boy.

rather than Look at the boy.

look up

I look up a word in the dictionary.

This is one of the many two-word verbs in English which cause trouble for Arabic speakers. They might say:

*I open a word in the dictionary.

loud
Arabic speakers confuse loud, aloud, and high.

love
(See like.)

make

I made a mistake.

Arabic speakers often confuse do and make:

*I did a mistake.

(See also do, play a joke, take.)

make oneself
(See pretend.)

many
(See much.)

mark

What kind of car is that?
What make of car is that?

Arabic speakers will say:

*What mark of car is that?

midnight
(See after midnight.)

move
(See walk.)

much (many)
There is one equivalent word for much and many in Arabic.

my, mine, belong to me

This is my pencil.
This is mine.
This belongs to me.

Expressions indicating possession are often not used correctly by Arabic speakers. Instead, they say:

*This pencil is to me.
or *This pencil is for me.

(See also BE + to me.)

*my possible
Arabic students substitute this for my best:

*I did my possible.

(See also *all my possible.)

name
(See call.)

near
Arabic speakers will often use near in the sense of next to.

next
(See second and near.)

(the) next day
Arabic speakers will often insert the preposition in where it is not appropriate. They will say:

*In the next day it rained.

instead of The next day it rained.

no-not any
(See any.)

noise
Arabic speakers confuse noise, sound, and voice, as these are the same word in Arabic.

of

Arabic does not have a preposition whose basic meaning is of: the preposition /min/ from is often used where English has of, e.g.:

*one from these days.

off

This has no direct equivalent in Arabic.

offer

(See give.)

old

(See big.)

old + BE

Arabic speakers often make such mistakes as:

*I have 20 years.
*I have 20 years old.
*I am old 20 years.
*My age is 20 years.

on

Arabic does not have a one-word equivalent used with verbs. (See at, laugh at, prefer, scold, throw at.)

one

(See a.)

one of

Translating from Arabic, students often use from, rather than of, in this type of construction:

*He is one from the best students in the class.

open

(See look up, turn on.)

opposite

Opposite our house there is a shop.

Arabic speakers might say:

*In face of our house there is a shop.

(See also face.)

paper

Arabic speakers will tend to confuse paper and a sheet of paper. They will say:

*Give me a paper.

instead of Give me a sheet (piece) of paper.

parents
Arabic speakers confuse parents and relatives.

pass
(See spend.)

pick, pick up
We pick something which is growing. We pick up something which is lying on the ground and not growing. Arabic speakers substitute pick for pick up:

*I'll pick you at seven.

pick out

Pick out the one you like best.
(meaning choose or select)

Arabic speakers might substitute the incorrect preposition:

*Pick up the one you like best.

play (noun)
(See game.)

play a joke, trick
Arabic speakers sometimes substitute make for play:

*He made a joke on his friend.

pleased with
Arabic speakers substitute *glad from or *happy from:

*I was very glad from him.
*I was very happy from him. (I was very please with him.)

police, policeman
Arabic speakers confuse a policeman and the police. A policeman is a man who belongs to the police force. The police is used when speaking of several policeman as a group, or of policemen in general.

practice
Arabic speakers may substitute practice where develop is appropriate:

*This sport practices the muscles.
(This sport develops the muscles.)

prefer
Arabic speakers will translate the Arabic equivalent directly and produce sentences like:

*She prefers this book on that book.

instead of She prefers this book to that book.

presént (verb), présent (noun)
Arabic speakers are confused by the difference in pronunciation which keys the difference in meaning.

pretend
Arabic speakers will say:

*He made himself ill.

rather than He pretended to be ill.

price
(See how much + cost.)

proud
(See see oneself.)

(to) put on clothes
Arabic speakers confuse (to) put on clothes, (to) dress, and (to) wear clothes. They also tend to omit on after put:

Put your clothes before you eat.

quick
(See fast.)

quiet (quite)
The similarity in pronunciation plus the difference in meaning of these two words causes a spelling problem.

reach
Translating from the Arabic construction, students usually tend to add a direction preposition with verbs of motion when they are speaking English:

*I reached to school at 8 o'clock this morning.

reason
(See BE + right.)

recórd (verb), récord (noun)
The Arabic speaker has difficulty in recognizing that the noun and verb are identical except for stress placement.

relative
(See parents.)

resemble
Arabic speakers say:

*He resembles to his father.

instead of He resembles his father.

return
Arabic speakers might say:

*He returned back.

instead of just He returned.

right
(See BE + right.)

rob
(See steal.)

roof
(See ceiling.)

sad
(See angry.)

sail
(See walk.)

scenery
This is always a singular count noun in English. Arabic speakers might attempt to use it as a plural, on the analogy of view, which can be either singular or plural.

scold
Arabic speakers will say:

*His father shouted on him.

instead of His father scolded him.

second
Arabic speakers substitute the second for the next, because of the Arabic translation.

*the second meeting instead of the next meeting.

see
(See look at, how.)

see oneself

Arabic speakers say:

*He sees himself.

when they mean He is conceited, or He is proud.

shall (should)

Shall has no equivalent in Arabic. An Arabic speaker tends to use will instead. Should also has no immediate Arabic equivalent and is confused with shall.

ship + go, move, or sail

(see walk.)

should

(see shall.)

shout

(See scold.)

since

(See for a long time.)

sink

To sink is to go down in the water. To drown is to die in the water. Anything can sink--a person, a ship, a stone. But only something which is living--a person or animal--can drown. Arabic speakers might say:

*The ship drowned.

sit

(See stay.)

skin

(See leather.)

sleep

(See lie down.)

sleet

(See hail.)

small

Arabic speakers confuse little, small, and young; all expressed with a single adjective in Arabic:

*He graduated from high school when he was very little.

smooth

This is often confused with soft.

so

I don't think so.

Arabic speakers often omit so and say:

*I don't think.

which is grammatical but not the appropriate response to questions such as:

Will it rain this afternoon?
Can you come to dinner tonight?

so — He ran so fast he became tired.

Arabic speakers substitute very in this type of construction:

*He ran very fast that he became tired.

soap

This is a non-count noun in English. In order to specify number, we must use a qualifier:

a piece of chalk, a bottle of ink

Arabic speakers often use non-count nouns incorrectly:

*I have a soap.
*We write with chalks.
*He bought an ink.

soft

Often confused with smooth.

some

The difficulty arises when some is not stressed. If it is, then it has a direct equivalent /baʕḍ/. If it is not stressed, then it has no Arabic equivalent, and the Arabic speaker tends to drop it.

sorry

(See angry.)

sound

(See noise.)

spend

I spent two weeks in Rome.

Arabic speakers substitute pass:

*I passed two weeks in Rome.

station

On the analogy of railway station, Arabic speakers use station where stop is appropriate:

*There is a bus station near my house.

stay

Arabic speakers often substitute sit for stay:

*Where are you sitting in the city.

As usual, this is a result of a direct translation from the Arabic equivalent.

steal

To steal is to take an object which doesn't belong to you. To rob is to take something from the place in which it is found. Arabic speakers confuse these two and might say:

*A thief stole my house last night.

stop

(See station.)

stranger

Arabic speakers confuse stranger and foreigner.

study

(See learn.)

such

There is no one equivalent word for such in Arabic.

take

Arabic speakers might say:

*I made an examination yesterday.

instead of I took an examination yesterday.
(Cf. make, get; see bring, get permission.)

take a walk

(Cf. go for a walk.)

take hold of

Arabic speakers confuse to take hold of, to hold, to catch.

tall

Arabic speakers confuse tall and long, which are the same word in Arabic:

*He is a very long man.
*That is the longest building in the city.

tear

Arabic speakers confuse tear and tear up. To tear a piece of paper is to separate it, or a part of it into two pieces.

To tear up a piece of paper is to make it into a number of smaller pieces, usually so that it is no longer of use.

than (in comparison)
Arabic uses /min/ from in comparisons:

*She is taller from John.

the
(See a, an, all day long.)

the news

On the analogy of plural count nouns with the -s suffix in English, the Arabic speaker will view news as a plural noun and is likely to say:

*The news are good today.

this afternoon
The Arabic speaker will say: *today afternoon.

this evening - tonight
Arabic speakers will say: *this night.

this morning
Arabic speakers will say: *today in the morning.

this way
(See from here.)

throw
Arabic speakers confuse throw and throw away. To throw something is to send it through the air with a motion of the arm. To throw away is to dispose of it, to throw it with the purpose of disposing of it; you don't want it any longer. The Arabic speaker will say:

*I threw the letter.

throw at
Arabic speakers substitute on:

*He threw a stone on the bird.

tie
(See link.)

time
(See enjoy, hour.)

to
(See at, enter, leave for, reach, resemble.)

today
(See this afternoon, this morning.)

toes
(See fingers.)

too
(See also, very.)

toy
(See game.)

travel
Travel is used only for long distances. Arabic speakers may erroneously use it for short distances.
(See go.)

turn off
(See close.)

turn on
Arabic speakers may substitute open:

*I opened the light.

under
(See in.)

until
Arabic speakers often use until in the meaning of by the time that... I'll have finished by the time you get here becomes:

*I'll finish until you arrive.

Arabic speakers also confuse until with as far as. Until refers to time, as far as indicates distance. Arabic speakers may say:

*He walked until the corner.
*He studied as far as 7 o'clock.

(See also as far as.)

up, up in, up on, upstairs
Arabic has one word /fawq/ for all of these English words.
(See also cheer, pick out, tear.)

very
Arabic speakers confuse very and too, both expressed in Arabic by /kaθīr/ very. It is very difficult to grasp the difference between them. The Arabic speaker tends to use too to mean a greater degree than very:

*This coffee is too delicious.
(i.e. exceedingly delicious)

(See also also, so.)

view
(See scenery.)

voice
(See noise.)

wait for
Arabic speakers tend to omit the preposition:

*I waited him a long time.

walk
In English, vehicles take verbs of motion other than walk or run. However, an Arabic speaker might say:

*The ship is walking fast.

instead of moving, going, or sailing.

want
(See like.)

watch
(See clock.)

wear clothes
(See to put on clothes.)

weather
Arabic speakers confuse weather and climate. The weather of a place is the state of the air, whether dry, wet, hot, cold, calm, or stormy, at a particular time. The climate of a place is the average condition of the weather over a period of years.

well
Arabic speakers have trouble with the correct placement of well in the sentence:

*He speaks well the English.

what + call
(See call.)

what...for
Arabic speakers say:

*What for you did that?

instead of What did you do that for?

win

The usage of win and beat is a difficult distinction for Arabic speakers. We say win a game, but beat an opponent. The Arabic-speaking student is likely to confuse these.

wish (hope)

Arabic speakers have difficulty in grasping the subtle differences between the two words, which requires hope to be used in the future while wish is used in more general terms.

would

Arabic speakers have difficulty in understanding the different usages of would because some of them are lacking in Arabic. They often substitute would for will.

would like

(See like.)

yesterday

(See last night.)

young

(See small.)

yours

Yours has no direct equivalent in Arabic. Possessive in Arabic is expressed in a different way:

This book is for you.
(This book is yours.)

SUBJECT INDEX

abstract nouns: see nouns
accusative case: see case
active participles: see participles
active voice: see voice
adjective complements: see complements
adjective idafa 75
adjectives 33,55-56,60,66
  Arabic 129
  attributive 32
  base adjective 128
  comparison 33,105,133-136,149,170
  complement 65,67
  derived 129,130,136,137,157
  inflection 33
  noun phrase 116
  with gerund 76
  with infinitive 75
  with infinitive complement 65
  with that 75
  (See also degree)
adverbial clause: see clauses
adverbial complements: see complements
adverbial expressions (forms) 48,65
adverbs
  Arabic (use of) 65
  comparison 103-104
  degree 105
  derived from adjectives 100
  derived from nouns 101
  formation 100-102
  frequency 102
  interrogatives 45
  location 105
  manner 109,110
  order 101-102
  particles 44
  predicate 47,50
  problems (use of Arabic adverbs) 66
  verb modifier 50,56
  with be 47,60
adversative conjunctions 48
affricates: see consonants
agent (performer of act): see voice active
agreement
  feminine singular 32
  number 50
  subject-verb 50
  with nouns 32
agreement questions: see question types
alphabet
  Arabic 25-27
  (See also handwriting)
alveolar articulation 17,18
/ʔamma/ [as for] 52,53,54
/ʔan/ [that] 41
/ʔan/ clause: see clauses
anaphoric articles: see articles
and clause: see clauses
aphorisms 60
apposition 47,50
Arabic: literary vs. colloquial i
articles
  anaphoric 121
  definite 122
  definite with compound noun phrase 122
  generic 121
  indefinite 120
  non-definite 120
aspect 84-87,96-99
  completed action 39,84,86
    in future time 40
    passive 42
  continuous action 94-95
  description of current state or circumstance 40
  descriptive function 45,49
  earlierness 79
  generalization 40
  habitual action 40,41,79,87
  imperfective 97
  narration of events 39,49
  narrative function 45,85
  non-perfective and perfective 96
  past habitual 86-87
  perfective 37,41,98
  prediction 38,40,46,79,85,86,89
  present perfect 37,98
  priorness of action 40
  progressive 37,94-96
  progressive action 40,79,87
aspiration 15
assimilation 5
-ate suffix 117
attributive adjective: see adjectives

auxiliary verbs 9,58,83
construction 9
lack of in Arabic 58
use 83

basic form: see verbs
be
equational sentences 46,47
equivalent 76
expression of to be 31,47,60
68
infinitive 65
passive marker 49,99,100
progressive marker 94,95,98
with ing 94
with predicate 60
broken plural: see number, plural

cardinal numbers: see numerals
case
accusative 30,31,32,44
accusative of specification 50
cognate accusative 101
functions of 30
direct object 31
modification 31
object of preposition 31
second noun in noun phrase 31
genitive 29,30,31
inflection 32
nominative 30
two accusatives 65
causative verbs 64
citation stress: see stress
classical Arabic writing system 25
clause modifiers: see clause; modifiers
clause structure: see clause
clause word order: see clause; word order
clauses 46-56
adverbial 76
/ʔan/ 75,83
and clause 54,55
Arabic 46
functions 38
modifiers 48,51,54,55,56
nominalized 38,46-48,50 73,112
relative 54,137-141
subordinate 141-142ff
word order 51,70-71
clear /l/ 19
common gender: see gender
comparison of adjectives: see adjectives
complementary infinitive: see infinitive
cognate accusative 101
complements
adjective 67
adjective infinitive 65
adverbial 67
complement of obligation 67
gerundive object 63,64
indirect 61,62
infinitive as object 63
infinitive complement 62,110
nominalized verb 64
nominal object 64.65
completed action: see aspect
conditions 51-52,91-94
contrary to fact 51,90
hypothetical 51,91,92
possible 91
realizable 51
unrealizable 51
conditional particles 45,51
conditional sentence 51,52,94
conditional would: see would
conjunctions 45,48-51
/ʔan/ 38
/ʔanna/ 38
that 38
connecter 47,48,50
connectives 76,77
consonants 14-20
affricates 17,18
chart (English) 12
chart (Arabic) 13
clusters 24,25
flaps 15,19
fricatives 14,15,16,17
nasals 18,19
semivowels 14,19
stops 14-16
trills 19
consonant clusters: see consonants
content questions: see question types
continuous action: see aspect

degree inflection
comparative 33,37
superlative 33
definite article:see articles
definiteness 124
deletion of verb phrase: see verb dcletion
demonstrative pronouns: see pronouns
demonstratives 128-129
this 128
that 128
dental articulation 17,18
dental /l/: see /l/
derived forms 3
derived verb form 105,106
chart 107
derived adjectives 129
noun forming derivational morphemes 116
description of current state or circumstance: see aspect
descriptive function: see aspect
determination 29
determiners 119
indefinite determiners 120
121
nunation 29
(see also articles)
dialect 13,14,16,17,20
diminutives 118
diphthongal glide 24
diphthongs 20,22-24
direct command(imperative)42,43
direct object: see objects
dual: see number

earlierness: see aspect
emphasis 34
English common tense:see tense
epenthesis 14,16,25
epenthetic vowel: see vowel
equational sentences 30,46,47
existential sentence 46
predicate in 31
subject in 31,38
verb to be 60
existential sentences: see equational sentences
expletive it: see it
expletives 71
expression of to be: see be

feminine morphemes 118
foot: see tone group
fractions: see prearticles
fricative: see consonant
future modals: see modals
future perfect: see tense

gemination 25
gender 29,114
common gender 34,43
distinctions in singular and plural 114
feminine suffix a 29
inflection in verbs 39
in verbs 43
neuter 29,69
generalization: see aspect
generic articles: see articles
genitive case: see case
gerund constructions 64
gerund nominal 74
gerundive objective complement: see complements
gerunds 33,38
goal (recipient of act): see voice, passive
greetings: see intonation

habitual action: see aspect
/hal/ 57,81
handwriting 25
alphabet 25-27
classical Arabic writing system 25
handwriting problems (English) 27
hypothetical conditions: see conditions

/ʔiða/ [if] 51,52,91
imperative: see direct command
imperfective aspect: see aspect
imperfect tense: see tense
impersonal it: see it
impersonal you, we or they72
/ʔin/ [if] 42,51,52,91
indefinite article: see articles
indefinite determiners: see determiners

indicative: see mood
indirect command: see passive
indirect object: see objects
infinitive
  complement of included sentence 110
  object 63
  objective complement 62,64
  phrase 67
  purpose 74
  subject 73
  use 72,74-75
  verbal nouns 33,38
  with to 63
inflection
  adjectives 33
  nouns 29
  past tense 80
  pronouns 33,34
-ing form 98
intensifiers: see prearticles
interjections 44,45
internal vowel change 39
interrogative phrase: word order see word order
interrogatives 44-45,51
  particle /hal/ 57,81
intonation 1-11
  amazement 10
  Arabic 6
  attached questions 11
  auxiliary verbs 9
  be 9
  commands 10
  echo questions 10
  exclamations 10
  greetings 8
  interrogative word 9
  matter-of-fact statements 8
  requests 10
  yes-no questions 10,57
intransitive verbs 60
inversion
  it 69
  questions 81
  there 70-71
isochronism 5
it
  expletive 69
  impersonal it 69,70
  it inversion 69
  it statement 69
it inversion: see it
it statement: see it

juncture 76,77
jussive: see mood

know vs. find out 41

/l/
  clear 19
  dental 19
  velar 19
  palatized 19
/la/ negative particle 82
/lam/ [did not] 42
/lan/ [will not] 42
/law/ [if] 51,52,91
/li/ [in order that] 41,42
limiters: see prearticles
linking verbs 65-66
lip rounding 21
locative adverb: see adverbs
locative prepositions:chart 44-45

modals 81,88-90
  future modals 93
  modal auxiliaries 87
  past modals 93
modifiers 47,49
  clause modifiers 48,51,54 55,56
mood 39,41
  indicative 41,43
  jussive
    indirect command 42
    negative imperative 42
  subjunctive 41,43,83-84
morphology 29-44

narration of events: see aspect
narration of completed events: see aspect
narrative function: see aspect
nasals: see consonants
negation 81-83
  negative particle /la/ 82
  negative particle not 82,89
  /lam/ [did not] 42
  /lan/ [will not] 42
negative questions: see question types
neuter gender: see gender
nominative case: see case
nominal object complement: see complements
nominalization 141
nominalized clauses: see clauses

nominalized verb: see verbs
nominalized verb complement: see complements
non-definite article: see articles
noun inflection: see case, inflection
noun phrase 111-142
as modifier 49-50
as subject of equational sentence 47
modification 136ff
noun prepositionals 44
noun replacement: that + sentence: see that
nouns 29-33
abstract 75
adjective as noun 116
animate 29
compound 115,116,122
concrete 37
constructions 115
count 123,128
definite 27
derived 116-119
human 32
inanimate 29
indefinite 29,68
mass 122-123,159,168
non-count 128
non-human 32
plurals 32-33
proper 29
proper names 119,120
(See also: articles;case; gender;definiteness; determination; number)
number 29
agreement 80
classes of nouns 113-115
dual 29
plural 29
broken plural 30,114
sound plural 30,113,114
singular 29
verbs 39,43
(see also: agreement; numerals)
numerals 33,36
Arabic 27
cardinal 36,123-124
numeral one-a 36,123
ordinal 124
syntax of numerals 36,37
nunation: see determination
object of preposition: see objects
objects 39,49,61
direct 31,37,61,64
indirect 61,62
of preposition 31
second objects 49
off-glide 22
one: see numerals
ordinal numerals: see numerals
palatized /l/: see /l/
participles 37-38,129-133
active 43,63,98-99
Arabic active 131
Arabic passive 131
English past 132
modifiers of subject or object 50
passive 43,44
perfective aspect 133
word order (English) 130,132
particle /qad/: see particles
particles 29,44-45,109
conditional 45,51
verbal 45
vocative 45
/qad/ 79
partitives: see prearticles
parts of speech 29
passive voice: see voice
passive constructions: see voice
passive participle: see participles
past habitual: see aspect
past modals: see modals
past perfect: see tense
past perfect progressive: see tense
past progressive: see tense
past tense: English: see tense
past tense inflection: see inflection; tense
past tense modal would: see would
past time marker /kān/ 86
perfect formative 97
perfect tense: see tense
perfective aspect: see aspect

perfective meaning: see aspect
person 39,45,80,81,83
phoneme 21
phonology 1ff
pitch 1,2,3,8
plural: see number
positions of the tongue 21
possessive forms 119
possible conditions: see conditions
prearticles 125
  fractions 126,127
  intensifiers 125,136
  limiters 125,136
  partitives 127,128
predicate 46,60
predicate adjective 65,66
prediction: see aspect
predictive (future): see aspect
prepositions 143
  locative chart 44-45
prepositional phrase 47,49,50 56,77
present indicative verb: see tense
preterit: see tense
preverbs: see verbs
primary stress: see stress
priorness of action: see aspect
progressive action: see aspect
progressive meaning: see aspect
progressive constructions: see verbs
pronouns 33-36,55,56
  demonstrative 33,34
    (chart) 35
  gender 33,34
  independent 33,34
    (chart) 34
  inflection 33,34
  interrogative 33,35
  number 33
  person 33
  relative 33,35
    (chart) 35
  stress 10
  suffixed 34
proper names: see nouns
prosodic features 1,6
punctuation 27
punctuation marks 28

question types
  agreement questions 57
  attached questions 11
  content questions 57
  negative questions 59
  tag questions 59,60
  wh- questions 57
  yes-no questions 10,57-59
question word 57,81

realizable conditions: see conditions
reduction 5
  vowel reduction 24
relative clauses: see clauses
relative pronouns: see pronouns
requests: see intonation
rest (in a foot) 5
retroflexed vowel: see vowel
rhythm 1
  stressed time 4

secondary stress: see stress
second object: see objects
semantic features 32
  human vs. non-human 32
semivowels 14
sentences 46-51
  conditional 51,52
  equational 46-48,60
  exclamations 11
  with it 69,70
  with there 68,70,71
  with that 71
  with wh- word 71-73
(see also: clauses,equational sentences;verbal sentences)
singular: see number
sound plural: see number, plural
specification: see Case, accusative
stative meaning: qualitative verbs 41
stops
  alveolar 14
  bilabial 14
  dental 14,15
  glottal 16

unreleased 15
velar 16
stress
citation 7
emphasis 34
patterns 115
primary 4,6,7,8
pronouns 10
secondary 6
sentence 6
weak 8
word 6
(see also: word stress)
stress-timing 6
subjects
of equational sentence 46
of verb 39,49
subjunctive: see mood
subordinate clause: see clauses
subordinate phrase 55
syllabic consonants 18
(See also: consonants,nasals)
syntax 46ff
noun phrase 111-142
sentence structure 46-77
verb phrase 78-110

tag questions: see question types
tense: 39-41,84-87,96
English common tense 84
future perfect 79,97
imperfect 39,40-41,43,45,49 52,80
past 41,86,92
past perfect 79,96
past perfect progressive 95
past progressive 87
past tense inflection 80
perfect 39-41,49,51,97
present indicative 63,84
preterit 87
(See also: aspect)
that as demonstrative 128
that with sentence: noun replacement 71
with sentence as object 71
there
with indefinite noun phrase 68
inversion 70
this as demonstrative 128
tone 1-5,8
contrastive 3
wh- question 9
tone group 2-6,8
foot in tone group 4,5
tonic 2,3,7
intonation:Arabic stress6
tonic syllable 3,8
topic comment 5,21,52-54
transitive verbs 61,66
trill: see consonants
two accusatives 65
two-word verbs
intransitive 109
transitive 61,106

unrealizable conditions: see conditions

velar /l/: see /l/
verb deletion 58,60
verb paradigm:chart. see verbs
verb phrase: syntax 78-79,88
with complement of obligation 67
verbal adjective: see participles
verbal auxiliary: see auxiliary verbs
verbal nouns 38
verbal particle: see particles
verbal sentence 30,46-49
imperfect function = description 49
perfect function = narration 49
subject 30
verbs
Arabic 9,55-56
attitude (verbs of) 63
basic form 37
duration 64
action or remaining 38
narrative function 45
nominalized 64
paradigm (chart) 43
preverbs 103
progressive action 40
progressive meaning 79
progressive constructions 99
subject-verb agreement 50
(see also: aspect; auxiliary verbs; causative verbs; derived forms; direct command; earlierness; English common tense; gender; intransitive; linking verbs; modals; number; person; tense; transitive;

two-word verbs; voice.)
vocabulary 143ff
vocative particle: see particles
voice
active 39
agent 39
passive 39,99-100
constructions 97-100
goal 39
in verbs 42
indirect command 42
vowels 11,20-24
Arabic (chart) 20
English 24
(Chart) 20
epenthetic 14,25
length 23
long 21
reduction 24
retroflexed 19
stressed 23ff
unstressed 24ff

/wa/ [and] 54
weak stress: see stress
wh- questions: see question types
wh- word
with infinitive as object 72
with infinitive as subject 72
with sentence 71
would
conditional 87,89-90,92-93
past tense modal 92
word order 30,32,46,81
adjectives 31
adverbs 101,102
clause 51,70,72
English participles 130
132,133
interrogative phrase 36,51,57
pronouns and nouns 34
word stress 6,7
English 7
placement 6,7
(See also: stress)

yes-no questions : see question types

WORD INDEX

Items in this index are English words that are used in the text to illustrate or explicate particular problems of English pronunciation or grammar. Items listed as vocabulary items in Part 6 are excluded from this list.

a 24,29,120
  an 121
  = one 36
act 16,65
advise 110
again 24
all 125
always 102,103
am 47
and 45,54,55,77
  and so 77
anyone 35
appear 65
apt 14
are 47,60
as 104,105
  as for 52,53,77
at 44,45
attempt 15
author 17
away from 44,45

bad 15
bait 21
be
  equational sentences 46,47
  equivalent 76
  infinitive 65
  omission of 31,47,60,68
  passive marker 49,99,100
  progressive marker 94,95,98
  with -ing 94
  with predicate 60
be going to 86
beautiful 24
beet 21
beetle 19
beg 62
begged 16
begin 78
behind 17
believe 65
besides 76
bet 21
bids 16
bind 23
bit 21
bitten 19
blower 24
boat 21
both 126
bound 23
boy 23
brother 17
build 67
but 21,45,77
butter 15,25
button 18

can 22,88,90,94
car 19
care 24
cat-tail 25
cattle 25,114
cause 64
chasm 18
clasps 14
clothes 114
come over 106,109
comfortable 7
comment on 78
consider 65
continue to 78
cook 22
cot 21
could 83,90,93
cow 23
crumble 23
crumple 23
cut 22

degenerate 117
depth 14
designed to 74
digest (noun & verb) 1
do 81
dogs 16

each 125
either 77
eleven 7
eleventh 125
engineering student 115
every 125

express 25

far 24
fate 22
father 22
fear 24
feel 17,65,66
few 127,128
fill 19,20
fire 24
fire fighter 118
first 124
five 124
for 24,74
foyer 24
from 24,44,45
fruit juice 116

get 64
give 61,62,100
gleam 25
glisten 19
goad 23
goat 23
going to 86
good for 76

half 126
have
(possession) 143
have to 89
I had him stay 64
perfect marker 79,95,96,97
he 33,34
health 19
hear 64,84
hence 76
hidden 18
him 33
his 34
hits 16
horse 17
hour 24
how 45,47
however 76
how much 45
hundred 124

I 33
if 45,90,92,142
/ʔiɓa/ 51,52,91
/ʔin/ 42,51,52,91
/law/ 51,52,91

in 44,45
indeed 45
information 114
insist 83
intend 63
into 44,45
is 47,60
it 69,70

killed 23
kilt 23
know 72,73

ladder 15
law 22
lawn mower 118
least 134
leave 19
less 134
let 64
letter 15
lit 19
long 18
look 66
lose 19
lot, a 128
low 22

made to 74
make (=cause) 64
malted 15
man 115
many 128
may 76
mayor 24
might 90
milk bottle 115
million 19
Monday 24
moon 22
more 134
most 128,134
must 89

never 102,103
news 114
no 57,58,59
not 59,82,89

O,oh 45
off 44,45
on 44,45

once 23
one 23,36,123,136
onto 44,45
or 77
order 62
out of 44,45

paint 67
pie 23
pit 15
play 14
pleased 63
poor 24
  the poor 116
potato 24
pray 14
pure 14
put away 109
put on 61

racks 16
rarely 102,103
rat 19
rhythm 19
ringing 18
roommate 7
root out 61
rubbed 14

say 67
schism 18,19
seat 23
see 63,84
seed 23
seem 65
seen 22
seldom 102,103
send 62
serene, serenity 117
series 114
shall 44
sheep 114
should 93
singer 18
skate 25
smell 66
so that 74
solace 24
some 120,128
songs 23
songstress 23
sound 65,66
sow 22
subtle 15

take in 61
taste 66
taught 22
telephone 19
tell 110
than 103,104,135
that
  demonstrative 34,128
  relative 139
  conjunction 45,71,75
  with sentence: noun replacement 71
  with sentence as object 71
the 24,29,122
then 77
there
  inversion 70
  with infinitive NP 68
there is/are 46,47,68,70,71
therefore 76,77
these 34,128
they 34
thinness 25
third 127
this 34,128
those 34,128
to 44,45
  to + infinitive 75
topmost 14
true 25
twenty 15
two 123

understand 84
used to 79,86,87
usually 102

vacation 21
value 19
veal 17
very 105

want 67
watch 64
what
  interrogative 36,51,71
  relative 71,72,140
when 45
whenever 76
where 17
wherever 76
whether 142
which 17,35,139

whichever 140
who
  interrogative 35,51
  relative 35,54,138,140
whoever 35
whole 125
whom
  interrogative 36,51
  relative 54,138
wife 115
will 79,85,89,90,94
wish 93
with 145
would 79
  conditional 87,89-90,92-93
  past tense modal 92
writer 15

57,58
yes 7
yesterday 33
you 34
your